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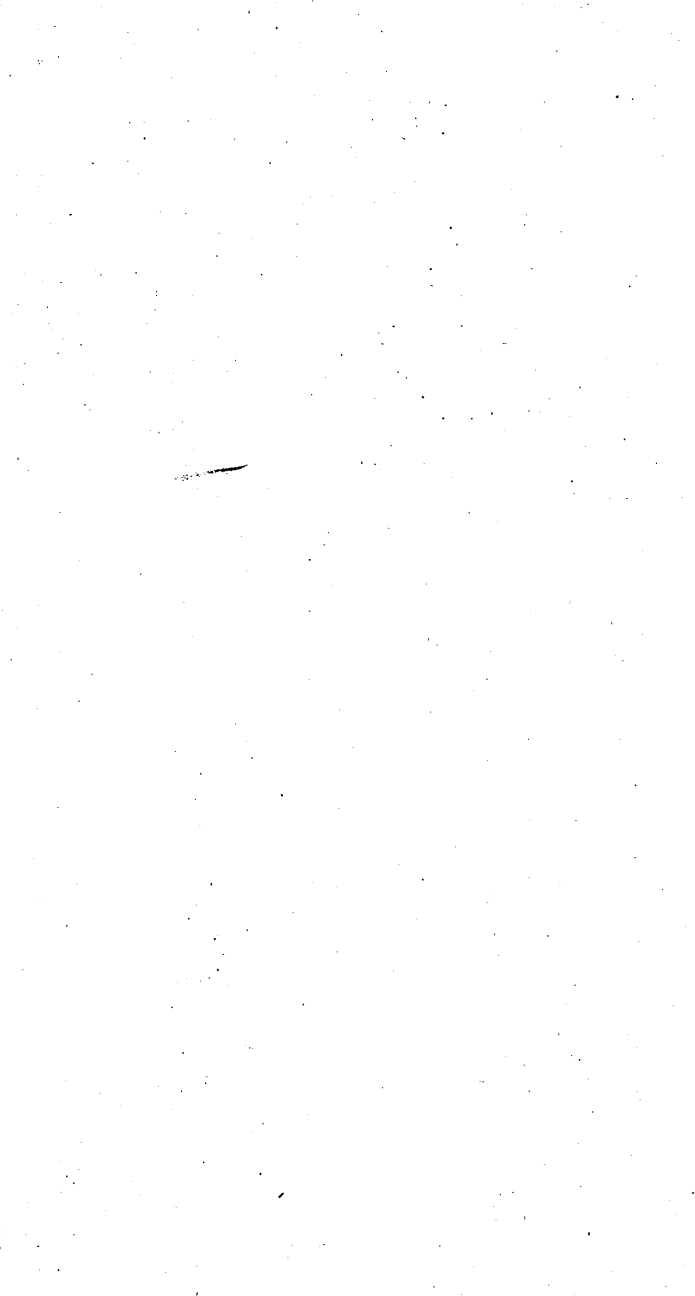
# WHAT IS A LIVING CHURCH?

By  
J. S. WHALE

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**WHAT IS A LIVING CHURCH?**



# WHAT IS A LIVING CHURCH ?

By

J. S. WHALE

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THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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**TO  
MY WIFE**



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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

ALTHOUGH this book has been written at the request of the United Council for Missionary Education, it is not a "missionary" book in the accepted sense. I am not qualified to write about the missionary enterprise of the Church in the world to-day.

My task has been, rather, to use that enterprise as a mirror wherein to see certain inescapable truths about ourselves, our own Christianity and Churchmanship here at home. To vary the metaphor, I have tried to think of our concern for foreign missions as a boomerang which comes back to us and even hits us very forcibly in the eye. These six chapters try to express something of the "home truths" involved in a hymn such as *Christ for the world we sing*. They try to answer the question which is obviously an urgent question for all who profess and call themselves Christians, and which therefore forms the title of the book.

I am grateful to the Editors of *The Spectator* and *The Christian World* for permission, graciously given, to use material from articles which I had contributed to those journals; and to Miss W. G. Wilson of Edinburgh House for her unfailing help and patience in seeing the book through the press.

J. S. WHALE

Cheshunt College,  
Cambridge,  
June 10th, 1937.

## NOTE TO SECOND IMPRESSION

READERS will find in this book many references to a forthcoming conference at Hangchow, China, in the autumn of 1938. The fact that this conference may have to be held elsewhere in the East does not, of course, in any way affect the author's argument.

## FOREWORD

by

WILLIAM PATON

*Secretary, International Missionary Council*

THOUGH missionary societies will be found enthusiastically selling this book it is a very unusual kind of "missionary book"; indeed it is not in the narrower sense of the word a missionary book at all. But Principal Whale may find as time goes on that in this little book he has struck a great blow for the cause of a universal Christianity, as contrasted with what is redolent of nation or of sect.

The purpose with which this book has been written may perhaps best be stated by one of those who persuaded Principal Whale to lend his eloquence to the cause. A good many people are aware that following upon two great international Christian gatherings to be held this year at Oxford and at Edinburgh there will be held in 1938, at Hangchow in China, a meeting of the International Missionary Council, and that one of the outstanding features of this gathering will be that a slight majority of those who attend it will come not from Europe and America but from Asia and Africa. It will provide perhaps the first instance in modern times of a great Christian gathering that is primarily a meeting of the Churches

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that have grown up all over the "non-Christian" world and only secondarily of the missionary bodies by whose labours most of these Churches have under God been brought into existence.

At this gathering, and long before it assembles, the leading men and women in these Eastern and African Christian communities will be working at certain great and fundamental themes. What is the Faith by which all Churches must live if they are Churches at all? That is a very important question if you are a Christian in, say, India, where you are surrounded by the ancient and extraordinarily pervasive religion of Hinduism. Again, the Christian religion has always stood for the universal principle: it has been for all men or not for any. How goes it in the modern world with this vital matter of the witness of the Church and of Christians? Once more, the missionary enterprise has never been conceived by those who knew anything about it merely as an effort conditioned by the force put into it by western Christians, the prolongation, as it were, into the East and Africa of the Church life of Europe and America. It has aimed at raising up within every people and kindred a true Church, something that is racy of the soil, that speaks of Christ in the accents of the people, that will last when the foreign help that aided in its growth has passed away. How is it with this matter of the life of the Church?

Or again, the Church as it grows up in the great lands of the East lives in the midst of a social and economic order that is changing with great rapidity,



for the industrial system of the West (to mention only one factor) has spread its influence literally to the ends of the earth. A living Church must have a word of God to say in such situations. Has it such a word? What is it? And we must add a last question—how to achieve within the Christian forces, divided as they are and mainly by the effects of western historical causes, the combination and coherence that the tremendous opportunities of the present time demand.

Now, these five great themes are being studied and worked over by a great many people in all the Churches of Asia and Africa. Much will certainly depend on what comes from this combined labour. Yet it is inevitable that only a relatively few people herein the West will have the knowledge or the inclination to join with any thoroughness in this work. Most British or American Christians will just have to leave it to the Indians and the Chinese and the rest, with such help as the missionaries and some people in the West can give them, to get on with their job.

But it is here that Principal Whale comes in. He virtually says to us—these great themes are universal; if they are not, then you have no business to be trying to get the eastern Christians to waste their time upon them; if they *are* universal then they are as relevant to England as to India, to Manchester as to Osaka, to the village Christianity of Dorset as to that of the Punjab.

Of course he is right. The book is an attempt to ask some of these questions and to address them to our

own Church and Christian life here in our own land. Principal Whale does not write as one who has large knowledge of missionary work, and the object of the book is not primarily to give information or to excite interest in what are called "missions". But he does remind us that to be a Christian is to be a member of a universal society, and that the same great questions about the faith and the witness and the life of the Church, about the Church's word to the world, about our divisions, need to be faced and answered by us in our older Christian environment.

Therefore the object of this book is, while saying very little about life overseas, nevertheless to unite us very closely with the Christians of those far-off lands. To this end it is important that attention should be given to the questions for discussion and other material, prepared by a small committee, which will be found at the end of the book. If this book can be used as the basis of a really objective and humble enquiry into our own religion, and if we can remember while we do that that we are sharing in a truly world-wide effort of the same sort, and that what we get out of it may be put into the common stock along with that which the Indians and the Africans may bring out of their totally different surroundings, then we shall be able, perhaps as never before, to see what the universal Christian community really is, and to rejoice and be glad that we are called into it.

W.P.

# WHAT IS A LIVING CHURCH?

## CHAPTER I

### A WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

What the soul is to the body that the Christians are to the world.  
—*Epistle to Diognetus.*

Do you know where the lightning is to fall next? You do know partly; you can guide the lightning; but you cannot guide the going forth of the spirit which is as that lightning when it shines from the East unto the West.—RUSKIN: *The Crown of Wild Olive.*

Lest having started others in the race, I myself should fail to qualify.—ST. PAUL: 1 Cor. ix. 27.

BEYOND Hyde Park all is desert. This pronouncement by Sir Fopling Flutter in the Restoration play neatly satirizes an attitude which is as old as civilization itself. Man's reluctance to take a world view is a commonplace. The Greeks calmly dismissed everything beyond Hellas as barbarian. The same parochial temper explains an amusing exchange which took place a few years ago in the smoking-room of an Atlantic liner. Some Americans had been modestly extolling their country with proper patriotism, when an Englishman remarked naïvely, "Yes, but it's so far away." Whereupon a New Yorker replied with equal naïveté, "Where from?" Both were virtually endorsing Sir Fopling's verdict.

On the other hand, there is the exactly opposite vice which belittles the sanctities of local patriotism in the

interest of a sentimental universalism. Dickens has satirized it in Mrs. Jellyby who knitted woollen waistcoats for the natives of Borrioboolagha, but neglected to clothe her son Peepy. And those lofty and ascetic idealists of the ancient world, the Cynics, who taught that the truly complete man should be above mere loyalty to the state, only succeeded in giving their name to a temper more deplorable than that of a narrow patriotism. Cynicism has not even the virtues of narrowness ; it has no loyalties at all.

The antithesis set up by these two extremes rests admittedly on the permissible exaggeration of satire. Sir Fopling Flutter and Mrs. Jellyby have been rarely, if ever, true to type ; we do not, in fact, have to choose between the parish pump and a Utopian idealism. But to-day, as never before in the history of humanity, new and revolutionary facts have emerged which make the antithesis not so much unreal as meaningless. The old tension between local and universal loyalties is now transformed, whether the modern man likes it or not. To-day we are all confronted, from China to Peru, with two facts which are as momentous as they are unprecedented.

The first is the now familiar fact that the modern world is one world. All modern issues are international in their scope. In the time that it takes to consult a wrist-watch news is flashed from London to Yokohama. Women fly the Atlantic, and the children in Rangoon who can hear Big Ben striking will soon be seeing it by

television. A political revolution in Brazil can throw men out of work in Birmingham ; a change of fashion in Paris may affect thousands of silk-workers in Japan ; with the result that our membership of one another throughout our ever-narrowing world is not a pious theory but an accomplished and incontrovertible fact. Parochial notions of economic self-sufficiency and political isolation are already obsolete, and although the world is not one body politic, it is in fact one body, whose several members are interdependent, willy-nilly. Indeed, the feverish nationalisms of our time, so far from giving the lie to this general truth, only serve to reinforce it. War in these days threatens more and more to be world war. It is no accident that the nations of the modern world, fanatically competing with one another in a new and more terrible armaments race, are now described as an armed *camp*, a suicide *club*. These social metaphors are inevitable and significant. The world is not a multiplicity of units insulated from one another, but one body.

The second fact, though less familiar as yet, is none the less real and momentous. At long last the Christian Faith is a world-wide phenomenon. In spite of all its feebleness and cowardice, its inconsistencies, divisions and degradations, the Christian Church is now a universal Church, co-terminous with humanity itself. This is the new empirical fact emerging in our twentieth century. Granted that the Faith is fighting for its life in Russia, Mexico, and even in Germany ; granted that it is menaced by secularism everywhere, and even

grievously persecuted in East and West: the fact remains that Christ in His Church is bidding for the heart of the world and that in this twentieth century, as in the second, the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church. An unknown Christian of the second century in his Epistle to Diognetus wrote that what the soul is to the body that the Christians are to the world. In spite of all appearances to the contrary, it was a prophetic comment on all subsequent history.

Plainly enough, the modern world is a body "in search of a soul" (to use Jung's phrase about the modern man). Its very oneness in external relationships makes its inward disintegration more evident and its spiritual need more urgent. Of the many examples which might be given of this tension between our outward achievement and our inward hunger, the League of Nations is perhaps the noblest and the most pathetic. Set up to express and vindicate the organic unity of human life everywhere, it has largely failed hitherto because it is without motive power. It does not find its high sanctions in the eternal purpose of God; the machinery is idle because it lacks the one mainspring which will make it work.

But there is a Christian Church everywhere in the earth and that is the new fact which heartens and challenges all those who live by the promises of God and take the long view, possessing their souls in patience, praying and working. In country after country the Christian Church has emerged in this twentieth century as a decisive, permanent and indigenous factor. The

young Churches of the far East exist in embryo no longer ; they are growing up and promising incalculable things which a hundred years ago would have seemed incredible, save to the eye of faith. Everywhere there is " a going in the tops of the trees ".

Here the evidence of great world conferences is significant and inescapable, even though we may be weary and a little suspicious of conferences. The chain stretching from Edinburgh (1910), to Stockholm (1925), Lausanne (1927), Jerusalem (1928), Oxford (Life and Work, 1937), Edinburgh (Faith and Order, 1937), and Hangchow (1938), represents a really comprehensive attempt to grapple with this new and challenging fact of a world-wide Church. Perhaps a piece of merely statistical evidence speaks most loudly of what is happening to the young " native " Churches of India and the East. In 1910 when the first International Missionary Council met, these Churches were represented at Edinburgh by two or three of their nationals at most. In 1928 at Jerusalem they formed twenty-five per cent. of the personnel of the whole conference. In 1938 at Hangchow, of the four hundred delegates who will come together more than one-half will be representatives of the young Churches which have been coming into their own during the last two or three decades. The number of delegates from the Churches in Great Britain will be limited to fifteen. Christendom is plainly as wide as the world when its oecumenical deliberations come to a proper and natural focus in the East, and when missionaries, in the narrower sense of the

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word, no longer take the lead. In the Church, too, there is no East nor West, and the distinction between home and foreign missions becomes more artificial every year.

This is not all. The lightning flashes from the East to the West as the spirit of God speaks to Christendom through a Kagawa in the slums and villages of Japan or through a Bishop of Dornakal in the amazing Mass Movements to Christianity in India. The Christian Church is growing in Manchukuo, even while it suffers almost incredible persecution there. It lives and testifies to Christendom in the persons of many young leaders throughout the rest of China, one of whom made the deepest impression in the recent quadrennial conference of the Student Christian Movement in Birmingham. It is no accident that professors and students in Japan are studying theology with the traditional thoroughness of the older Churches of the West and that the dogmatic theology of Karl Barth interests some of them as much as it does Scotland or America. Indeed, the world-wide fellowship of the Church is no merely theoretical thing when the interest of Christendom in the German Church crisis is itself world-wide and urgent. The crucial nature of the German Church struggle is recognized and watched with anxious interest everywhere, not least by the Church in Japan. Fellowship is seriously practical, too, when it issues naturally and spontaneously in a fellowship of giving. Only recently poor African peasant Churches in Nigeria sent help to South India out of love for the brethren.



## A WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

It is the old yet ever new story of the universality of the Faith. All sectional and local loyalties, all the immemorial differences of race, culture, rank, caste and sex, with the inequalities implied by each, are tested by loyalty to Him who has for Christian men and women the pre-eminence in all things. Many of the acutest practical problems with which Christians are everywhere confronted to-day, especially in the Far East, spring from the discovery that the Gospel necessarily transcends all that is local and particular, all that is merely national or bound up with race. From the beginning Christians have known themselves as a new race; their literature, in its noblest and most classic expression, has been eloquent of their oecumenical consciousness, their true catholicity. It is a significant fact, therefore, that although the forthcoming world conference is to be held at Hangchow in China rather than in Japan, it has the cordial approval of the Church in Japan, fellowship in Christ being stronger than the notorious political tension between the two countries. In short, the visible Church of Christ is feeble enough; in membership and human resources it may sometimes look grotesquely inadequate for its task; but it is a world-wide Church; its problems and opportunities are universal in their range and importance, and this is a new fact in human history.

It is a fact which affects the older Churches of Christendom in two ways.

In the first place, here is the new yardstick by which

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our missionary policy and enterprise have to be measured henceforward. This world-wide Christianity which is already in existence has to be rooted and grounded in faith, consolidated and built up in churchmanship and Christian living. The missionary task of the Church is a constructive task. Just as we know nothing of disembodied spirit, so a disembodied Christianity is a contradiction in terms. The Church is no merely contemporary enthusiasm but an abiding life of faith and worship, evangelization and active fellowship, which looks forward into the future as well as back to the past.

It looks forward, and is necessarily a visible, continuing Church. The older slogan about the evangelization of the world in this generation must never be allowed to suggest that the next generation can look after itself. Christians always have a duty to generations yet unborn, and, in spite of much current indifference to the fact of the Church as corporate and institutional, it is the all-important and indispensable organ of everything that the Faith is and means. The "edifying" or building up of the Body of Christ is, therefore, our immediate and permanent task.

It looks back, too, and is necessarily continuous with its own historic origins, life and witness. We cannot as Christians repudiate or escape from our indebtedness to the past without radically altering the character of the religion delivered to us; chaotic subjectivism is always as grave a danger as the making of the Word of God of none effect through our tradition. The fact

is that Christianity is rooted in the stuff of history and that the great classic tradition of the whole Church is part of the data with which ministers of the Word and Sacraments, ecclesiastical statesmen, theologians, teachers of children and all members of the One Body, are inevitably concerned. In India, for example, something more than the "Indianization" of Christianity is required—important and valid as that process of adaptation admittedly is—if Christianity there in the future is to be continuous with the Christianity of nineteen centuries, and if the faith once for all delivered to the saints is not to degenerate into a formless mush of vague religiosity.

Thus the five great themes for discussion at Hangchow—the faith by which the Church lives, its witness in evangelization, its life and work, its relations to the social and political order, its co-operative use of its available resources—all go down to the roots and raise fundamental questions. What is the meaning of the Church's belief and worship and how is it all relevant to the actual situations in which men and women have to live their lives together in home, factory and market-place? The sense that the Church is somehow unreal is widespread. Its high claims and mystical language seem irrelevant in the context of common, everyday living. It has, apparently, little living relation to contemporary life. If the Churches were blotted out and their buildings turned into cinemas what, if anything, would plain men miss? Or, to put the opposite question, if an age of faith were to come

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suddenly to birth and the millions trembled and believed, would the Churches know and be ready for their distinctive work? In his *Outspoken Essays* Dean Inge did not spare us the grim criticism that the Churches have little influence and that if they had more they would not know what to do with it. Is this true? Would a challenging opportunity find us triumphantly aware of our *raison d'être*, able to do our real business because we know what it is? There is always a challenging opportunity, of course; but a greater could hardly be conceived than the one which God is presenting to this generation in earth-shaking events.

But in the second place, and intimately bound up with the foregoing, the fact that there is a world-wide Christianity is as much our intimate and urgent concern here "at home" as it is that of the young Churches of Africa, India, China and Japan. This heartening fact is also very searching. The vital issues before the Churches of the East are world issues. The crisis which takes different concrete expression in different places is the same the world over. The theme of the Hangchow conference is a mirror which faithfully reflects our own problems and needs. We cannot dissociate ourselves from what our fellow-Christians are enduring and thinking and doing far away in the East; we are not seated comfortably in the best seats of the amphitheatre, looking on and decorously applauding with gloved hands at suitable intervals while they sweat and labour in the arena. We are in the arena with them. Their problems are very certainly our problems.

We are not even like men who run cheering along the tow-path; we are ourselves engaged in the race, straining every nerve ourselves if we have any understanding of what we are about. In a famous imaginative passage of the *Essays* Macaulay anticipated some distant day when a New Zealander should sketch the ruins of St. Paul's. If the possibility sounds fantastic, its inner meaning is not. Paganism is widespread here, and we need not run to Russia, Mexico or Japan to find it. It is possible to start others in the race, and to fail oneself to qualify. Sir Fopling may yet discover that Hyde Park itself is a desert, and have to cry even to the ends of the earth, "Come over and help us."

A great oecumenical conference is not safely and conveniently isolated because it takes place on the Pacific Coast. The "mission field" challenges and searches the "home field" relentlessly, and compels us to ask fundamental questions, too, about our own Christianity—its faith, its worship, its witness and its living activity. It is with these questions that the following chapters are concerned.

## CHAPTER II

### A BELIEVING CHURCH

"Now I'll give you something to believe," said the Queen. "I'm just a hundred and one, five months and a day." "I can't believe that," said Alice. "Can't you," said the Queen in a pitying tone, "I dare say you haven't had much practice. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

But belief, as living men know it, is not the blind credulity of a few fanatics. All men live and act by faith of some kind. If they do not make it explicit in eloquent philosophies, it is implicit in their more eloquent deeds and dreams. When we come to die, what is our individual story but our answer, uttered and irrevocable, to the question of the ages as to the chief end of man? Faith, therefore, is not an "extra", a luxury added to everyday life by monks, mystics or pious ladies who have time and taste for that sort of thing. It is part of what humanity is and means; it is involved in what makes man man, and differentiates him from stone, potato or the highest animal. Faith is not only legitimate but inevitable; we have a right to believe because we must.

Even the indubitable failure of religious faith in the modern world does not mean that the multitudes who

have lost the ancient certainties are now living in a vacuum of unbelief. The transcendent implications of man's life are not stifled so easily. It is because people have still to find some high principle which will give coherence and direction to their lives that they hail Nationalism or Race as the chief end of man. When knowledge of the living God dwindles to an academic theism; when Providence becomes a difficult theory and prayer an intellectual enigma, the deification of the totalitarian state is already foreshadowed. Ceasing to render anything to God men learn inevitably and quickly to render all things to Caesar; the new irreligion is, in fact, the old religion called Paganism.

What is the faith by which the Church lives as it marches down the centuries? Living Christianity is what it ever has been, a believing Christianity. The New Testament is many things but it is never wistful; it rings with a note of solemn, joyous certainty; its religion is never a problem to be solved but the solution to all problems. Before the Gospel impels us to do anything at all, therefore, we have to see and know that it is a Gospel, prepared for us from the foundation of the world. If worship with all that it implies is the primary Christian privilege and obligation, conviction is its presupposition and *raison d'être*.

First and last, Christian belief is belief in the living God, who has revealed Himself to man in history, who is known for what He is by what He does in His mighty acts of creation and redemption. Here is the Alpha and Omega of our faith. The Christian answer to the

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age-long question, What is man? is that man is not primarily and essentially a thinking animal, a tool-using animal, or a laughing animal, but an animal made in the image of God; that is, he is not an animal at all. He has his very origin and essence in the creative Word; it is God who has set eternity in his heart.

Again, the Christian way of thinking about sin—all the rampant lies, cruelties and degradations in human life, proclaimed any morning in any newspaper in any part of the world—is that sin is more than a private thing like vice, and more than a social and public thing like crime; it is moral evil seen in its relation to the holy purpose of God. Again, the vital heart of our faith is Jesus Christ our Lord, His incarnation, atonement and resurrection from the dead. Christian preaching has never spoken of Him as men speak of an Aristotle, a Socrates or a Confucius—teachers of ethics, reformers of morals, prophets of a new social order; the minister of the Word is called and ordained to speak of *God* in Christ, or not at all.

Again, Christians have never known the Church as a society of man's contriving, an expression of human idealism like a mutual improvement society or a club for recreation, fellowship and goodwill, with the minister of the Word and the Sacraments as its competent and salaried secretary. Christians know the Church evangelical and catholic as the sacred gift of God, which no merely naturalistic or evolutionary categories can explain; it is a wonderful and sacred mystery, the great company of the elect of God stretching



beyond the sight of any man across the centuries and the continents: the host of the living God sharing His very life in all places and in all ages, on earth and in heaven; the Church which God loved, Christ purchased, and the Holy Ghost sanctified, and which Christ will present to Himself a glorious Church. All is of God; indeed we Christians cannot open our mouths to speak of any aspect of our religion without speaking of Him with whom we have to do.

But incertitude is the mark of the hour, and multitudes now ask whether there is any valid ground for this belief. It is denied by the communist, for example, who is no woolly-minded and negligible opponent. Since the basis of his Marxist philosophy is uncompromisingly atheistic, he regards all this as a nauseating and dangerous superstition which must be destroyed before the perfect human society can be established. He sees that the theism of the Christian religion and the materialism of Karl Marx are mutually destructive. It is at this crucial point that modern Christian apologetic has to take its stand, therefore, since communism is the most notorious and thorough-going of the modern "ideologies" with which it has to contend.

This chapter will go on to argue that the belief on which the Church's life is built is (1) a rational belief, (2) a realist belief, (3) a redemptive belief; leaving to the following chapter the content and experience of that belief as it becomes luminous and alive in worship and life. Religion is not philosophy, admittedly. The

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Christian belief in God is more than theism. Our God is not merely the creative and directing mind of the whole evolutionary process. We know Him as one who works salvation in history, and who has dealt with us in the person and work of his Son. A Christian naturally stands at that centre ; but a modern Christian apologetic may not unprofitably move thither from the circumference.

Belief in God is, first of all, rational.\* Though reason cannot strictly prove that God is, that He creates and sustains all things, this is nevertheless the inevitable assumption and testimony of the human mind. Our experience at all its levels points beyond itself to an Ultimate Reality which is personal.

If we stand at the level of nature and look at the world of things and events around us, we cannot doubt that there is purpose in all this marvellous complexity. The long story of organic evolution reveals no unmeaning chaos but a vast governing plan which we can explain only in terms of a creative mind, planning and influencing the process throughout. We know something of what we call the natural history of this evolutionary process which stretches back through millions of years into the cosmic past ; geological and biological research discern with growing clearness " a general trend towards intelligence " in it ; the process is continuous, yet there are breaks or increments

\* Some readers may wish to skip this brief section in which the technical language of abstract discussion is occasionally unavoidable.

in it whereby beings of increasing consciousness successively emerge. At first there is nothing but matter, without life or consciousness ; then life in lowly vegetable form appears ; a later break in the one continuous process adds mind or consciousness to life,—mind which is not identical with matter, which acts by its own principles and is not reducible to the categories of physics and chemistry. Finally, in this higher order of intelligence and freedom, self-consciousness is added to consciousness and man appears who, though conditioned by his environment, is yet master of it, a self-conscious, self-determining, responsible being. This is the distinctive nature of mind as we know it ; it is purposive and initiating ; it is not moved by impacts from without as is a lump of putty, but is itself free and creative. How then is this “ natural ” history of our universe to be explained ? Clearly the most significant thing about it is this evolution of a human mind able to think about and make sense of the universe. (Indeed, here is that crucial point of difference between Christian theism and the Marxist philosophy, on which all other differences between them turn ; it has an urgent practical importance which can hardly be exaggerated.)

Believers in God answer that the history is not natural in the sense that it contains its complete explanation within itself ; the process is purposive ; it points beyond itself to a creative mind which is not only its source and ground but its goal. To quote Professor A. E. Taylor: “ It will always appear

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preposterous to regard the production of moral and intelligent masters of nature as a mere by-product or accident of evolution on this planet, or as anything but the end which has all along determined the process.”\* The truth is that evolution is a description of the process, but not an ultimate explanation of it. Evolution, which is a mysterious process taking place *within* the universe, cannot explain itself. As the Dean of St. Paul’s points out in his important book on the whole subject, the emergence of mind is unintelligible unless the course of evolution is directed; “on any other view it is impossible to see how there can be any reliance on the power of the mind to know truth.”† Naturalistic or materialistic theories of evolution deny the theistic and Christian view, namely, that creative mind must direct the process throughout; but in so doing they “lead to a negation of the possibility of knowledge, and therefore of the truth of the theory of evolution itself”.

But this is not all. Come up higher now, and look further at man as a moral being: one who transcends the physical order of nature not only by understanding it but by valuing it and judging. It is the unshakable testimony of history, literature and conscience that his moral and spiritual values are an essential part of his experience of the universe; his sense of the sacred is a demonstrably ultimate fact, not to be bargained with nor weighed against anything else; its worth for him

\* *Essays Catholic and Critical*, page 56.

† *The Purpose of God*, page 102.

is incomparable and its binding obligation absolute. It is independent of temporal consequences like persecution and death. Beyond it he cannot go. This inextinguishable sense of moral obligation surely means that here is something akin to whatever is ultimate in the universe itself. "Whoever says 'Ought', meaning 'Ought', is in the act bearing witness to the supernatural and supra-temporal as the destined home of man." It means, therefore, that the purpose of the Supreme Mind of which we have been speaking hitherto is a moral purpose. You cannot explain man's moral consciousness by any alien principle; his feeling of reverence for the eternal moral verities can only rightly be felt for an Ultimate Reality which is personal. The Supernatural to which man is by his very spiritual structure adapted is personal. "What does *the Lord* require of Thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with *Thy God*?"

It is obvious, of course, that a purely natural theology would be a contradiction in terms; finite man cannot know the infinite God in His essence; God must reveal Himself; He must speak if we are really to know Him. But, on the other hand, the Faith is not irrational, and we may not appeal to what is sometimes called the "higher irrationalism" without thereby providing a cloak for any authoritarian position desired. It is a *rational* belief which thus anticipates God's revelation of Himself in the stuff of history. History is the workshop of God's revelation, and history ever witnesses not only to God's speech but to man's rational response.

It is this kinship between God and man which makes revelation possible.

In the second place, the belief on which the Church's life is built is realist to the core. If the Gospel were no more than moral man's highest idealism it would not be a Gospel, Good News, but a mockery ; a sentimental and frivolous thing pretending, in defiance of the fearful and universal facts of sin and woe, that " everything in the garden is lovely ". It is because moral man consciously misuses his freedom that his world is not a garden ; too often it is, in the traditional language of the hymn-books, a wilderness, a barren land, a realm of bitter things. He is literally in bondage to perverse desires ; his will is strangely corrupted ; indeed, it is his abiding predicament that as a moral being he is also a sinner. Nature follows its essence ; but man, just because he is man, can contradict his essence. There is a division within him. Though he loves goodness and reverences absolute values, he often puts relative values on the same level with them. At once repelled and yet attracted by sin, aspiring to the highest and yet sinking to the depths, he is often an incomprehensible monster. *Homo viator* (man is a pilgrim, an idealist) ; but also *homo homini lupus* (man is a wolf to man). His very progress brings fearful dangers and evils in its train. Mrs. Markham flies the Atlantic in the darkness alone, and the world rejoices at this wonderful triumph of the internal combustion engine, the science of aviation and—not least—the spirit of a woman.

But this same invention was being used at the very moment of Mrs. Markham's triumph to asphyxiate and disembowel men, women and children in Spain. Our growing humaneness and intellectual adulthood seems always to have this reverse side. The scientific research, for example, which makes the miracles of modern medicine possible, is at the same time threatening us with mustard gas, Phosgene, Vesicant Dew and other blasphemies against the temple of the Holy Ghost. Our broadcasting by wireless, too, is certainly "progress", but its inevitable correlative is modern propaganda technique and all the hideous possibilities which go with it.

We cannot explain this mystery of iniquity. We only know that, in spite of all bland optimisms which virtually make a religion of progress, iniquity is ever the universal fact. The moral consciousness of humanity at large and of each human individual without exception affirms that there is something wrong, *radically* wrong, with man's world. Classic attempts to account for it in terms of Satan or of some aboriginal calamity called the Fall may raise as many intellectual difficulties as they try to solve, but their significance lies in the fact to which they give unwavering witness. Reason cannot explain the fact as a natural fact (an "evolutionary overhang", for example) without emptying it of its grim, ethical meaning; and reason cannot accept its ethical meaning without making it the inexplicable mystery that it is—the one completely irrational fact in God's universe.

Much modern Christianity has been weak because it has been largely an optimistic religion which virtually reduced the living God to a synonym for the spiritual values of our civilization, our modern science, culture and progress, values which earlier generations had sought as a miraculous gift of supernatural grace "from the Beyond". Men were so sure that this world was rational, in the sense that they were able to control and shape it according to their own rational and progressive purposes, that they found the classic gospel of redemption positively embarrassing; they continued, hesitatingly and a little rebelliously, to use the old theocentric language about sin and man's need of redemption, but they relied in fact on their own resources, substituted a little sanctified psychology and a diluted socialism for the Faith, and talked with sentimental enthusiasm about the brotherhood of man as though Utopia were just round the corner. The "gospel" of humaneness and social idealism filled their vision as the old note of crisis and urgency was fading away. The latter scarcely seemed called for; to preach as a dying man to dying men seemed morbid and unhealthy to the modern mind stuffed with jolly ideas about inevitable progress.

This almost truculent optimism may be said to have come to its climax in the Great War, in that men were most noisily proclaiming their power to save themselves just when there was least evidence of their ability to do so. And the War—with its twenty million dead and its four years of physical and moral tragedy which, so



far from crushing militarism in Germany, has only succeeded in increasing it there and everywhere else ; which, so far from making the world safe for democracy, has made it a happy hunting-ground for ruthless autocracies—the War is an abiding monument to man's confident religion of humanism and self-sufficiency ; it testifies anew to the stern antagonism between what he is ideally and what he is in fact, and to his desperate need of a Power, not himself, taking hold of him and revolutionizing his life.

Nothing is more significant or hopeful in these days of crisis and realism than the way in which serious people everywhere are re-discovering the old truth that man cannot save himself, and that for human welfare something more and other than human nature is needed. A realist faith is no facile optimism :

*'Tis the faith that launched point blank its dart  
At the head of a lie, taught original sin,  
The corruption of man's heart.*

Browning's lines give point to the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent warning that this civilization of ours holds nothing in itself by which it can achieve its own salvation. " There is nothing," he said, " literally nothing—I think there is scarcely a thoughtful man who denies it—that can save civilization, but the incoming of the rule of the unseen and eternal Kingdom of God."

In the third place, then, the belief by which the Church lives is a redemptive belief. The idea of

redemption is essential for the understanding of the New Testament, that collection of writings witnessing to the life of the Church in the period of its beginnings and expansion. The conviction which made and makes the Church is that in Jesus Christ, the risen Redeemer, man is able to triumph over the powers which enslave him. Christ is not only an example of the good life ; even His sublime teaching does not exhaust His cosmic significance ; His human life is the activity of God in time, triumphing over the powers inimical to man, including man's last enemy, death, and bringing the New Age, the life of the eternal world, into this corrupt and broken world of time. Without this belief there would be no real uniqueness in Jesus Christ, and no real redemption.

There is no vital religion in which the living God is regarded merely as a creative force. In every religion worthy the name God works salvation. It is in this regard that the religious attitude differs from the merely philosophical attitude. Indeed, though the historical origin of religion is still a vexed question, many thinkers agree that religion—considered from the human end, so to speak—originates in man's desire to break with the failure of life and to accept new life at God's hands. " In all higher religions ", says the Dean of St. Paul's, " the promise of redemption from the world is more fundamental than the faith that the world is providentially ordered." Religion does not cause that notorious problem of evil which belief in God makes so acute ; religion is the answer evoked by it in the

hearts of men who hear and believe the Word which God has spoken. It is a significant fact that every higher religion has to become a religion of redemption even though it does not begin historically as such. For here is man's desperate need to which God makes answer in history. To quote a familiar proverb (and to ignore the crudity of its theology), man's extremity is God's opportunity.

It is not too much to say that men everywhere are re-discovering the Gospel to-day because of their awaking sense of need for what it offers. It offers redemption ; it is a Word-from-the-Beyond for man's predicament, mediated through events of history and—as the next chapter will show—alive and creative in the life of the Body of Christ, the Church. More than man's highest idealism, it is the Word of God coming from eternity into time and in terms of time, in judgment and sovereign grace.

Just here the Church—living as it does by this belief—again confronts two notable contemporary ideologies. In Germany and Russia to-day the dominant philosophies or religions of state-absolutism repudiate the idea of redemption. Even the Christian Church in Germany is struggling to decide whether its theology henceforward is to be a theology of creation wherein the facts of this created world such as race, blood, soil, culture and human achievement are the only significant realities ; or whether the life of the Church springs from a reality or dimension "*ganz anderes*", i.e. wholly other ; a new dimension of redemption and revelation

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cutting across the familiar dimension of time and sense. Again, in Russia the idea of redemption is virtually rejected. The communist finds the root of evil in the economic system, not in the corrupted will of the responsible individual who makes and sustains the system.

The Christian does not deny that the system is evil ; he, too, wishes to change it ; but he goes deeper in his analysis and diagnosis. Thus the fundamental question before modern man is the question about his own nature and meaning ; it goes to the roots and divides men radically ; no issue in the modern world is more urgent than this ultimate question about the chief end of man.

To sum up : the Church lives only as a believing Church and if its faith is to be what it has been from the beginning, it must be a rational, realist and redeeming faith. The next chapter must speak of its content and living operation.

## CHAPTER III

### A WORSHIPPING CHURCH

"Constantinople is full of mechanics and slaves who are all of them profound theologians. If you desire a man to change a piece of silver he informs you wherein the Son differs from the Father ; if you ask the price of a loaf you are told by way of reply that the Son is inferior to the Father ; and if you enquire whether the bath is ready, the answer is that the Son was made out of nothing."—GREGORY OF NYSSA (fourth century).

"I was wrapped up, as in a rapture, in the Lord's power ; and I stepped up in a place and asked the priest, 'Dost thou call this place a church ? Or dost thou call this mixed multitude a church ?' . . . But instead of answering me he asked me what a church was. I told him the Church was the pillar and ground of Truth, made up of living stones, living members, a spiritual household, which Christ was the head of : but He was not the head of a mixed multitude, or of an old house made up of lime, stones and wood. This set them all on fire."—GEORGE FOX (seventeenth century).

"Prayer is the only adequate confession of faith."—JULIUS WELLHAUSEN (twentieth century).

A CHRISTIAN congregation is not a school of people assenting to correct doctrine, though Christianity obviously involves doctrine ; primarily it is a company of believers whose belief finds its living expression in corporate worship. Worship is the only sufficient evidence of living religion. To have a God, said Luther, is to pray. Of the many things which Christians everywhere have to re-discover, is anything comparable to this in importance and urgency ?

An instrument was once set up on a Cornish headland to measure the velocity of the wind, so that daily

statistics might be compiled and weather signals sent to all the coastguard stations of the West. But one night it disappeared ; it was hurled away by the wind. The intricate mechanism was destroyed by the Atlantic gale it had presumed to measure.

That is a parable and a warning. We know how temptingly easy it is to be "interested" in religion, handling and dissecting the deepest things by which men live ; chewing but not swallowing ; repeating theological formulas instead of knowing that which passeth knowledge. And just when we are finding a delicious thrill in discussing God, the mystery of godliness in the life of a humble Christian saint may come as a rushing mighty wind, sweeping our talk away as a trivial and even blasphemous irrelevance ; just when we are blandly arranging to photograph the heavenly vision we may suddenly be blinded by the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel will not be appraised or estimated. Instead of our judging the Gospel, it judges us, turning the tables upon us and compelling us to make some decision regarding it. When Froude remarked casually that William Law's *Serious Call* was a very clever book, Keble said, " It seemed to me almost as if you had said that the Day of Judgment would be a very pretty sight." Froude never forgot his rebuke. We cannot talk with airy detachment about what God in Christ has done for men ; the wind which we presume to measure takes the measure of us.

Faith is never an aesthetic attitude, but decision and surrender and devotion ; it is not abstract form but life. Just as there is all the difference between the snake, dead and dull in its labelled bottle in the museum cupboard, and the living serpent moving in terrible beauty through the grass like a cast lance,—so there is all the difference between the dry bones of analysis and the living body of experience. Formulas have always a smaller content than actual experience ; reality is always characterized by a wholeness which makes all mere analysis of it an abstraction, a partial thing. The real thing is what Mr. Petulengro loved, the wind on the heath, not the chart at the observation station. “ There’s night and day, brother ; both sweet things ; sun, moon and stars, brother ; all sweet things. There’s likewise the wind on the heath.” The gipsy loved the wind ; he did not measure it.

We are all concerned with measurement and analysis in the religious life at times, of course. In these days, especially, we must have an apologetic for our faith which shall be thought out, adequate, applicable, and, therefore, authoritative ; we have to be ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us. But the abiding danger is that the subject matter may disintegrate beneath our touch, leaving us with the dry bones.\* Our abiding need, therefore, is to know the religious life which gives unity and meaning to the facts which the intellect examines.

\* “ Like following life through creatures you dissect,  
You lose it, in the moment you detect.”

Where is this need for a living synthesis met? We know that it is met in the living tradition of the Church; in every means of grace where the deep realities of the Christian religion glow with light and become alive; in corporate worship and in the Sacrament of Holy Communion which is its climax. We cannot know God in any other way than by living together in God, learning to do the will of God and so knowing the doctrine. The doctrine comes last not first. The character of the living God is known only as it is adored and shared. A man is not a true disciple until—all barren questioning and empty argument abandoned—he can say, “What shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. I had heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee.”

In the full service of public worship in any Christian church there are two permanent elements which together constitute a living, liturgical unity—a Word Service and a Communion Service. Whatever the rich variety of its forms, Christian worship has always made this twofold witness to the Gospel: first in praise, prayer, and in the reading, preaching and hearing of the Word; second, in the Sacrament of Holy Communion where all the foregoing come to a climax, and action adds something new to thought. The Pulpit and the Holy Table—the Sermon and the Lord’s Supper—alike show forth the Christian Evangel of God’s purpose in creation, of His grace in redemption and of His real presence with His people unto life eternal. Christian



worship of whatever tradition—Byzantine or Roman, Lutheran or Reformed—publishes this Word, in all its majesty and power.

Consider first what has been broadly but conveniently described as the Word Service, which precedes the Communion Service proper. The appeal throughout is to history ; to events in time which throb with an eternal note ; events which are at once the acts of men and the mighty acts of God, the raw material of His wonderful works.

The Bible which is read from lectern or pulpit is the witness made to such events ; by prophets, for example, who look forward out of the Old Testament to the Kingdom and righteousness of God which shall be revealed ; or by apostles and evangelists in the New Testament who look not so much backward as upward in adoring gratitude to Christ crucified and risen from the dead ; that is, to the Power of God and the Wisdom of God which have indeed been revealed in the context of a perfect human life of holiness and love.

Again, Christian prayers of adoration, confession, and intercession, the praises of the congregation in psalm or hymn, are rooted in this continuous revelation. Christian men do not pray to God in His unknowable transcendence but to God as revealed in this redemption which He has wrought in history. God in His essence is not an object of human experience ; our knowledge of Him is never in the strict sense immediate. Indeed human experience testifies that such knowledge is

mediated to men almost always through other men (not to mention women, notably our mothers, whose priesthood is from God or there is none worthy the name). Just as Descartes, when asked what his religion was, replied, "Well, naturally, the religion of my king and my nurse," so to the Jew God was the God of *our fathers*, the God of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*; to Elisha, left suddenly alone in the world, the living God for whom he cried out was the Lord God of *Elijah*. And to us, He whose Word is uttered in the words and symbolic acts of an Isaiah or a Jeremiah, whose grace in redemption is bodied forth in the vicarious sufferings of a Hosea or a servant of Jahweh—is known henceforth and for ever as the God and Father of *our Lord Jesus Christ*.

All Christian prayer, then, rests on the promises of God, which are vindicated in history by the testimony of prophets, and which are Yea and Amen in a manger, a cross, an empty tomb, a road to Emmaus or a road to Damascus.

Once again, Christian preaching sums up and proclaims these things. But it is the paradox of all Christian preaching that though it is concerned with that which is above time and beyond history, as all religious acts must be, it proclaims the absolute significance of a particular historical process and of one person in that process who is its climax and its last word. Indeed, Christ is known for ever as the Word, who took flesh and dwelt among us, coming within the compass of our understanding and embracing our

broken humanity unto death, and beyond death, that life and immortality might be brought to light.

The preacher's word, then, is built on historic facts which are indisputable. There was such a Man. He spake as never man spake, with a strange and final authority which authenticates itself as compellingly to-day as it did nineteen centuries ago. The sublimities of His teaching about God and man are familiar and unquestioned, not only by His professed followers, not only by the zealous Hindu who will often describe the life of a good man as "Christlike", but also by plain men everywhere who recognize the highest when they see it, whether they love it or not.

Further, it is a matter of historic fact that to Himself and to His contemporaries Jesus was more than a reformer, transforming all the traditional ideas which He touched, transcending the moralism of prophet or the legalism of Pharisee with His "I say unto you". Implicit and explicit in His words and works, and in the august titles which He unquestionably used for Himself (Messiah, Son, Son of God, Son of Man) are certain tremendous claims. More than one of the prophets proclaiming the future Kingdom of God, Jesus is the conscious agent or representative of God inaugurating that Kingdom here and now as a present reality. He witnesses to His own unique historical significance when He proclaims that in and through Himself the long-expected Divine Order or Kingdom of God has come upon men. He is a man among men, man in the full psychological sense, sharing truly and

fully in the conditions of our humanity. Yet He is more than man, and knows that He is more. His language about Himself unquestionably implies unique oneness with God, a unique moral authority over men, a unique ministry of salvation towards them, a unique mastery over the powers of evil, and a unique triumph over the suffering and death which He must needs undergo, since it is what that salvation costs the love of God. To cite only one piece of evidence—His parable of the vineyard is on the scale of eternity; a Word from the Beyond rings through it; it surely means that He knew Himself to be charged by the Father with the redemptive recovery of men, and that He looked at and past death itself, conscious that He had therein a unique relationship to earth and heaven. If the parable does not mean this, language does not mean anything. The long-expected Kingdom of God is now an experienced fact for all who have eyes to see; the divine power is breaking into history from beyond history for the salvation of men. But because God is the Father who loves to the uttermost and yearns after His children, His Kingdom comes with power not by way of punitive justice but by the higher way of suffering love. This is the mystery of the Kingdom. God's representative must suffer and die. Only in this paradoxical and shocking form can the love of God manifest itself redemptively in a world of sin. The agent of God's saving grace in the world must endure the cross and go down into the darkness of death, not only to reveal and condemn sin in all its naked horror, but also to make

out of this lowest depth to which the race of men could go down, the supreme occasion of redeeming grace. What is always a stumbling block to some and foolishness to others is to them that believe the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Moreover, proof that the age of triumphant divine power had now dawned lay in the glad conviction which made and makes the Church, namely, that the same Jesus who died could not be holden of death but is alive. The burden of the earliest preaching was Jesus and the Resurrection. No early Christian, says Kittel, wrote a sentence about Jesus which did not proceed from the conviction that He had risen from the dead and was present in their midst. The Age to Come was clearly present when the power of death over a life altogether good was broken by the power of God. The followers of Jesus—those who like St. Paul were “in Christ”—shared this power. The life of the Age to Come was theirs, as the gifts of the Spirit testified; they had been translated out of the dominion of darkness into the Kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. i. 13); they were the Body of the living Christ, sharing here and now in a life over which death no longer had dominion. “The supreme and final mediation of the divine is henceforward through a living Person for ever identical with the Jesus of history.”\*

The preacher, therefore, witnesses to eternity in the

\* See *The Meaning of the Resurrection* (“Modern Churchman,” December, 1927), by Prof. C. H. Dodd, to whose teaching this and the following pages are closely indebted.

midst of time ; to redemption in the midst of sin and corruption ; to the love of God triumphant over death, which is the head and front of all evil. The preacher is more than an historian, he is a herald. He is no mere lecturer stimulating interest in the past, but an evangelist demanding decision here and now. It is his vocation and responsibility to cry, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. . . . Now is the appointed time. All Christian preaching about the eternal God finds its sanction and power in the intrinsic authority of a human life, death and victory over the grave, through which God spoke with power in the fulness of time, and through which, by His Spirit, He speaks for ever.

Consider next the Communion Service proper at the Table of the Lord, the focal centre of the life of the Church, where the great phrase " in Christ ", implying the closest possible union between the living Redeemer and the Church which is His Body, finds corporate expression.

We meet together at this Table that Christ may do for us here what He has done for uncounted generations of Christian men. Jesus said, Do this in remembrance of me. Men have done it ever since. The Holy Table has been the focal centre of Christian worship from the earliest times ; there is nothing older in Christendom. Before a single word of the New Testament was written ; before the formulations of theology or the rich and diverse developments of ecclesiastical practice ; before

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ever the disciples were first called Christians—the redeemed of the Lord met together here, to receive the sacred pledges of His redeeming grace. And the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper has lasted as an unbroken tradition, as a rite which, however variously administered and interpreted, has never lapsed from the day when the Master and His friends met in an upper room until now.

What Christ does for us here is unsearchably rich in meaning. Plainly enough, this central fact of the Church's life has many aspects, yet three aspects have been determinative from the beginning. There is, first, the historical or memorial aspect ; we remember here what was said and done in time by Jesus ; this feast is a memorial feast, commemorating the mightiest of God's mighty acts of grace in the cross and the resurrection. There is, second, the timeless or eternal aspect. Here we are lifted out of time and have communion with the very life of God. The feast mediates God's presence and His very Self to us : here our fellowship with God and in God has all the actuality and wholeness of life. Thirdly, when by an act of faith we partake together of Bread and Wine in this Sacrament, these two aspects become one. At this Table there is a unique fusion or synthesis of what is historical and what is beyond history ; of what is in time and is remembered, and what is timeless and is experienced.

First, then, there is the memorial act. Its observance has never been broken from the beginning ; the Holy Table represents a direct historic continuity with the

origins of our religion and our worship. It is a vitally significant fact that not a single Sunday morning has passed since the first Holy Week without Christian men and women meeting at the Holy Table. The well-known problems as to the exact words used by Jesus at the Last Supper and as to the exact history of the rite during those dim years before St. Paul wrote are real enough ; they rightly engage historical scholarship ; but they are not vital here. It is enough for us that only twenty years after Calvary St. Paul delivered as an assured tradition at Corinth the words and acts which constitute the Supper ; and that we are doing *quod ipse Dominus fecit*\* as we break the Bread and take the Cup. At the time when the Christian religion reached and conquered St. Paul these words formed part not only of the tradition but of its very earliest deposit. They expressed something vital and essential about Christ's character and work as it was known to His followers. He is the Author of our sacramental faith, the One from whom it springs. Before all study of the documents printed as the New Testament, He was and is known to men in the breaking of the bread. We do not read ; we remember—because our fathers and their fathers before them handed it down—the words and acts of the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed. We stand here in the apostolic succession of all believers. It is not a succession of readers of a printed record, inexpressibly precious to us though that record is. “ Jesus loves me, this I know, for the

\* i.e. What the Lord Himself did.



Bible tells me so " is a truth less vital and important than the one expressed in an emendation by a Methodist divine, " for my mother told me so." He meant, surely, that our fathers remembered and told their children; we the Apostolic and Catholic Church of His Body remember His speaking these significant words and performing these significant acts in the Sacrament, because our fathers in Christ from the very beginning delivered to us what they also received. The true *Ur-Evangelium* or primitive Gospel, said Professor B. W. Bacon, was not printed books,\* but two rites: the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

Therefore Jesus Christ, the Author of our faith, is not like any figure in the past, however outstanding and venerable, whom we re-discover by studying contemporary records. We do not re-discover Him. The whole Church remembers Him continuously at this Table. These mysterious words and acts are mediated to us within the mysterious life of the Church, not through historical research based on synoptic criticism. The supreme events of the life of Jesus have had an effective impact on men's lives continuously. This is a fact of the present as much as of the past. "The past, properly understood," as Eucken says somewhere, "is no mere past." I think that Croce

\* Luther often urged this point, that the Gospel is not a book but a living tradition of news-telling. "It is not that which stands in books and is made up of letters of the alphabet, but rather a proclamation passing from mouth to mouth, a living word, a voice, which rings throughout the whole world so that it is heard everywhere."—E.A., xii, 156 [my translation].

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means the same thing when he says that all history is contemporary history. Indeed, an historical fact continuously remembered and operative in life is not past at all. Here you have unbroken continuity of remembrance and thanksgiving.

Second, there is communion here, common participation in the eternal life of God. We share with others in something. The Holy Communion is so called because the very life of God is given to us as we share it together. We all partake of the one loaf; the symbolism is primitive and universal. Katherine Mansfield records in her *Journal* how she once passed some men working on the road. They had stopped to eat together, and the writer adds, "they had lunch out of a paper. It is very beautiful to see people sharing food. Cutting bread and passing the loaf, especially cutting bread in that age-old way, with a clasp-knife."

Beautiful and age-old, because the act of eating is peculiarly significant as an expression of communion. It goes deeper than playing or singing together because it signifies our creaturely dependence on that which is Not-Ourselves. Here we are all humble pensioners at the gate of God. There is no human need more elementary and universal than food and drink, no act of fellowship simpler and commoner than eating and drinking together; indeed the whole mystery of life is wrapped up therein.\*

\* In this and the following paragraph I am deeply indebted to an unpublished address delivered by Prof. Dodd at Oxford in 1929.

The rite of Holy Communion reminds us, therefore, that just as we are nourished by the same food and are literally of one substance with one another, so we share together what is given to us freely by our Creator and Redeemer; we receive and share His grace. At the Lord's Table a symbol is given to us "which by its simplicity and inevitability is supremely fitted to be the doorway to reality". Primitive man expressed this sense of creaturely dependence in his corn-rites; he deified the Corn Spirit, taking into himself the life of the god. It is further proof of the deep roots which the simple act of eating together has in our common humanity. A common meal forms part of many religious rites; it may well be, indeed, that it played a larger part than we know in the public ministry of Jesus and that He often gave to the common meal the deep significance which it has so markedly in the *Last Supper*. This meal, at any rate, is the symbolism chosen for the Church from the beginning; it is the effectual sign of that divine word of grace by which man lives. Our life is more than physical; we do not live by bread only, but by the Word of God coming down out of heaven. We are utterly dependent not only on the physical which is not-ourselves, but also on the spiritual. The eternal Word is the environment and ground of our existence. "To us," says the earliest extant liturgy of the Church, the *Didache*, "Thou hast given spiritual food and drink through Thy Servant."

In this Sacrament, therefore, we celebrate the mystery of life as corporate communion in and with

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the eternal God. His life is given to us in terms of sharing—a truth of the spiritual as well as of the physical realm. Just as life comes from the laying down of life; just as the seed dies that we may have bread, and the grape bleeds that we may have wine, so the very life of God the Giver is broken and poured out for us.\* Holy Communion is so named because it is fellowship with and in the very life of God at the Lord's Table.

In the third place, and finally, the historic fact of Christ and the eternal life of God are given to us in this Sacrament as an indivisible unity; the two realities fuse into one. All the deep significance of the Sacrament as fellowship in the life of God is mediated through what Christ was and is to His Church. God's presence and His very Self are ours through and in Jesus Christ. Eternal life comes to us through the life and death of the Jesus of history. What we remember comes as the supreme function or aspect of the divine life.

Thus Christianity avoids two dangers ever threatening the religious life. The first is the inevitable subjectivism of a religious experience uncontrolled by the concrete fact of history; there are so many experiences, vague, elusive, and irreducibly different from one another. Our experience of God is controlled at all

\* Cf. Otto Fricke, *Die Sakramente in der protestantischen Kirche*, page 38. "Why, then, must we eat the flesh and drink the blood? We must do so in order to be able to live. Life is only possible on the basis of sacrifice. . . . All nourishment is sacrificed life. Bread and Wine are, therefore, the representation of the nourishment of life."

times by the fact of Christ. The second is the danger of making the living Word of God of none effect by deifying a dead tradition of the past. Our faith distinctively avoids this by interpreting the historic facts of the New Testament *through the inward testimony of the eternal Holy Spirit*.

The life of a believing, worshipping Church rests, therefore, not on mere history and not on mere experience, but on a living, corporate faith, two-fold in its reference but indivisible in its unity. First, Jesus Christ is not a figure of the past, like Socrates or Confucius, whom we rather admire, but the Word made flesh. Second, the living God is not an impersonal Absolute transcending the concreteness of history, but God in Christ. This is the heart of our faith and the living nerve of our worship. The Bread is bread ; but to those whose spiritual vision pierces to the secret of which it is the Effectual Sign, the Bread of Life is given.

## CHAPTER IV

### A WITNESSING CHURCH

"Ships!" exclaimed an elderly seaman in clean shore togs. "Ships"—and his keen glance, turning away from my face, ran along the vista of magnificent figure-heads . . . by the side of the New South Dock—"ships are all right; it's the men in 'em."—CONRAD: *The Mirror of the Sea*.

"It is men that make the city, not walls."—THUCYDIDES.

"As for Saul, he made havock of the church entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, viii.

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."—*St. Matthew*, vii.

THE thesis of this chapter is that vital Christianity is necessarily a witnessing Christianity. The permanent charge on the enthusiasm of a believing, worshipping Church is evangelization.

The passionate enthusiasm of young Communists and Fascists which is so notorious in these days is often described as a "religious" enthusiasm; men and women give themselves to these new "ideologies" with all the mystic exaltation of the devotee, all the ruthlessness of the bigot. They are ready not only to proclaim these new world-views and to work for their world-wide triumph, willingly undergoing discipline and enduring hardness; they will also kill and die for them. It is not without significance for us that this new enthusiasm has been called religion. For even if it be a misuse of

terms to speak of religion where there is no belief in God, the converse is unquestionably true, namely, that religion is always enthusiastic and propagandist ; it is that for which a man feels himself constrained to live and even to die.

A living Church is always a missionary Church. Propagandism is inherent in every true conviction, as St. Paul knew when he said, *I would to God that not you only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am.* That is not the speech of arrogance ; it is what a man who glories in a firm conviction cannot help saying. A believer is necessarily a crusader. He must go and tell John, and enter then and there into a fellowship with John so deep and rich that he and John carry on the work of witness together, the Lord adding to their number daily.

"No heart is pure," said J. R. Seeley, "that is not passionate ; no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic." Our faith is not safe, nor is it real faith, unless we find it so precious that we cannot keep it to ourselves, and unless we realize that religious individualism is a contradiction in terms. The religion which a man cherished in his bosom and kept to himself would not be religion but religiosity ; and, to go one step further, even religious fellowship which he enjoyed with a coterie of like-minded friends—carefully selected people of his own class or culture—would not be religious fellowship at all, but mere gregariousness. He only begins to understand the Gospel when he understands that it is

God's Good News for all sorts and conditions of men, and cries, Woe is me if I do not preach it.

Unless it is to be self-contradictory, religion must claim to be the truth about God and man. The Gospel is a gospel just because it claims to answer that cry coming from every kindred and tongue and people and nation since ever the world was—What is truth? Therefore you cannot toy with the Gospel; the aesthetic attitude is impossible here. To preach as a dying man to dying men is not morbid fanaticism; there is no other way of preaching a Gospel. Benjamin Franklin's remark, "Where liberty is, there is my country," may have been a fine statement of principle; but Tom Paine's glorious answer, "Where liberty is not, there is mine," is the only way whereby the principle has been vindicated by its witnesses in all ages. Often enough, witnesses have indeed been martyrs.\* The Gospel is news not notions; it is no accident that the first Christian man of whose mind and activity we have any detailed knowledge was a pioneer of the way of all Christian witness when he said, We are allowed of God to be put in trust with the Good News.

You remember how they brought the good news from Ghent to Aix and what a truly dramatic lyric Browning makes of it. Three men, galloping into the midnight, with news that was to save a city. Speed was everything. In silence they kept the great pace. At dawn one horse staggers and dies with a groan, and only two are left. When the spire of Aix begins

\* Our word martyr is the Greek word meaning witness.



to show white in the distance and Joris gasps, "How they'll greet us!"—his horse suddenly rolls over, dead as a stone; and all hangs now on a solitary horseman.

*Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,  
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,  
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise—  
bad or good,  
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.  
And all I remember is friends flocking round . . .*

News-telling is there summed up, not only for the seventeenth but for every century. Evangelism—the abiding missionary enterprise of the Church—is there essentially portrayed. The man has a message. It does not depend on him for its credibility or authority, as it would do if he were galloping to tell the world his private fancies and latest excogitations. The message has the objectivity of what is given by the stuff of events. It has the concreteness which belongs not to what might happen and might be true but to what has verily happened and is amazingly gloriously true. He has made it his own, yet it is not his message but the message of the one who sent him. This man delivers what he has received. He does not tamper with its distinctive content, subtly changing the real message into something different. He is neither uncertain nor half-hearted nor apologetic about his trusteeship, or he would hardly gallop with such confident and disinterested urgency. Nor does he mistake means for ends, confuse essentials and non-essentials, what is

passing with what is permanent. One thing is primary and fundamental—a courier must get there. Let others talk of travelling hopefully, he must arrive. And therefore it is a secondary matter that he is incorrectly dressed or has brushed aside the orthodox formalities and dignities of his herald's office, and is even behaving like a buffoon for the nonce ; he knows that his message is carried in his living heart and on his lips ; it is in himself and not in belt, pistols or jackboots—the mere apparatus of his embassy. No gospel ever depended on apparatus. It may and must use “ apparatus ” of course, but it depends on living men and women. “ Ships are all right ; it's the men in 'em.” Our several Churches, their Creeds, Confessions and Articles, the thousand and one ramifications of theology, all the diversities of cultus and ecclesiastical practice—these are right and necessary ; an organism needs and cannot exist without form and body ; it cannot begin to function apart from the body by which it is identified and with which it is indissolubly united. Nevertheless, what matters first and last is the living organism, the people in those Churches, the men making those confessions. All of us have our inalienable priesthood as believers ; unless we are ambassadors for the faith we are not holding the faith.

This means that a witnessing Church has a threefold task. Things being what they are, we have to witness first of all to ourselves, since so much Christianity is nominal rather than real ; this is the urgent task of revival. Second, we have to witness to children,

handing on to the future that which we also have received ; this is the inescapable task of religious education. Third, we have to witness to the great multitude everywhere which is largely pagan ; this is the fundamental task of evangelization. This chapter is concerned with the first two of these tasks, the concluding chapter with the third.

The call to religion, like many another call, begins at home. Chaucer's first and last word about the " poor parson of a town " was that he witnessed to things which were manifestly real and powerful in his own life :

*Christes lore, and His apostles twelve,  
He taught, and ferst he folwed it himselve.*

The prime duty of Christian men being their witness, they have to look first and last and at all times to themselves, if their witness to the world is to be convincing and effectual ; if it is to " cut any ice ". This is a commonplace to which the whole range of Christian history testifies, and it needs no labouring. Men are right in wanting a personal witness ; they are not impressed by what is second-hand. Until we can say to the world " We speak that which we know, that which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of Life, that ye may have fellowship with us," the world will yawn and turn away. A dramatic critic in an American newspaper gave this forcible advice to playwrights

some little time ago, "Don't tell 'em ; show 'em." He might well have been thinking not of the theatre but of the witnessing Christian Church. A renewal of vital Christianity in the world must begin among Christian people themselves.

The way of renewal is the way of prayer. This is the first and permanent charge on our enthusiasm as Christians. If the chief end of man is to glorify God the Church has to tell its members again about prayer, the only sufficient evidence of living religion and the only adequate confession of faith. Paganism begins where prayer ends, and it is undeniable that multitudes have ceased to pray. Modern civilization, though repudiating materialism as a formal creed, too often lives by it in fact ; men often practise what they don't preach. And Christendom's deadliest enemy is not a doctrinaire godlessness in Russia and elsewhere, but that practical atheism nearer home which neither denies nor affirms but ignores. In a world that is "too much with us" our deepest present need is heavenly-mindedness, the life in God to which worship is the means and of which it is an abiding expression. Modern Christianity, which has moved so far from its classic tradition in many respects, needs nothing so much to-day as a new technique of the spiritual life. We have to learn on our knees to evaluate this world against the background of its impermanence and to discover again that our citizenship is in heaven. "Be ye sure that the Lord He is God ; it is He that hath made us and not we ourselves." The Church which believes in

God the Father almighty and is the creation of His redeeming Word to men must begin there ; it must stand still, not only to say its prayers, but to pray.

Plainly enough the inner life of the Church depends on the religious life of the home, and vice versa. If there is no regular and real prayer in private and in the family, if our homes are not places where prayer is wont to be made ; if there is no private and diligent study of the Bible whereby men search the scriptures and find in them *the* fount of divine wisdom—little wonder that many a church service seems weary, stale, flat and unprofitable, and that no effective progress is made in enabling the ordinary Christian group to grow in the knowledge of the living God. Public worship thus degenerates into the likeness of a public meeting (without its possible liveliness !) and the result is dreariness and spiritual death.

What is the actual "technique" of renewal ? Experience suggests strongly that nothing new or sensational will do here, but that we have to begin with a few people, dedicated spirits who really care enough about the Church to meet together constantly as a small group and to pray. "For many years", wrote John R. Mott recently, "it has been my practice in travelling among the nations to make a study of the source of the spiritual movements which are doing most to transform individuals and communities. At times it has been difficult to discover the hidden spring, but invariably, where I have had the time and patience to do so, I have found it in an intercessory prayer life of

great reality." In every congregation of the Church there might be what Spener called an *ecclesiola in ecclesia* (a little Church within the Church), a group of people resolved on " reformation without tarrying for anie ", and whose life together in the intimacy of prayer and consecration is a vicarious priesthood, convincing others, subduing them to the same contrition, and drawing them into the same fellowship of renewal. Every individual woman or man of such a group would pray constantly in the words of the great high priestly prayer, " For their sakes I sanctify myself."

Further, we need to learn that our worship and our fellowship together in the things that belong to our peace happen too infrequently. We are not making a sufficiently regular use of the means of grace ; there is little rhythm about our religious life as there is, for example, about our eating or sleeping or recreation. Many people go to the " pictures " as regularly (though not as frequently, of course) as they take their daily walk or bath ; we all adopt certain fixed habits—changing our clothes, brushing our teeth, taking regular exercise—and these exercises give to our daily life a certain balance and tone which is good not only for the body but for the soul. But our " spiritual exercises " are often not only spasmodic and all too casual ; they are not only irregular but too infrequent. Attendance at church on Sunday is surely a good thing, but the Lord's people need daily " seasons of refreshing " at least. Such seasons need not and ought not to be long ; we are still prone to estimate our values quantitatively.

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But if we could give ten minutes in the lunch hour every day for the simplest of religious exercises, not praying alone in the secret place, but meeting in the sanctuary which is in a very real sense a holy place, we should learn from our new experience what we had been missing, and find in such a time of devotion an indispensable blessing. Our church life is usually crammed with activities, as the notices read out at Sunday services testify; the going concern has to be kept going; there are multitudinous activities and meetings for children, men, women, the young, the old. All this is doubtless good, but the supreme good on which all has to depend if it is to be truly Christian and bring in the Kingdom of God, is that constant touch with the eternal world which is the very heart and pulse-beat of religion.

Sabbatarianism can be, unwittingly, a hindrance to the true religious life. It is obviously more important that people should attend public worship once only on Sunday, and meet together for ten minutes every day in the week, than that they should confine their use of the means of grace to two Sunday services and go unfed for six days until Sunday comes round again. We have to make far more use than we have yet done of *short* and *frequent* times of retreat, when we wait upon God, if the foundation stone of all our building is to be well and truly laid.

In the second place we have to tackle anew the problem of religious education. Everywhere it is of

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paramount importance, and its close relation to the problem of the inner spiritual life of the home and church is becoming clearer every day.

“ Since I came here ”, wrote Katherine Mansfield in her Journal in 1916, “ I have been very interested in the Bible. I have read the Bible for hours on end and I began to do so with just the same desire. I wanted to know if Lot followed close on Noah, or something like that. But I feel so bitterly that I should have known facts like this ; they ought to be part of my breathing.”

Do the children of to-day learn of what is in the Bible at their mother's knee when they are still quite little, as children used to do ? Seated with her before going to bed, do they hear from their mother's lips the immortal stories of the Old Testament, for example, first in simple language and later in the strong, incomparable language of 1611 ? It is said that as one of the slow changes coming over the intimate life of the home, this beautiful and precious tradition is being lost and forgotten. People not only neglect to tell their children these moving stories out of the old Book, they no longer know the Book themselves. That half-hour at the close of the child's day—so tender and strangely holy as it can be—is not what it was. The children may say their prayers, but does the mother always gather them about her, praying *with* these little ones, with the old solemnity and piety ?

The mother (not to mention the father, who is equally responsible) may read to the children ; but what ?



*The Just-so Stories*, *Winnie the Pooh* or *Dr. Dolittle* are doubtless excellent and delightful, and there is a touch of magic in them all. We thank God for them, as we do for *Swallows and Amazons* and *Peter Rabbit*. But are they enough? Is even the loveliest magic "all we know on earth and all we need to know"? The spiritual fibre of man from childhood to old age is to be nourished, surely, on something deeper, sterner and more life-giving; something redemptive in its essential stuff. Is there not literature which is so historically and inevitably the Book of all books that we know it as *the Book*, BIBLE? And is it being read and bequeathed as in an earlier time?

As to the general truth of this complaint I cannot answer. It will be bad and sad for the nurseries, the homes, the very life of England when the Bible is neglected and forgotten. I only know that I am glad my mother gave to me things which are now my inalienable possessions. The stories of Abraham and Joseph, of Elijah and Naaman belong to me. They are mine in a way they would not have been had I merely happened on them or just tolerated them in a Scripture period at school, or even heard them read in church. These stories are part of my heritage; they were handed on to me with loving and careful gravity. I am glad that when I was little I wept for little Ishmael; that my heart went out to Esau with his exceeding bitter cry; that I rejoiced with David, and held my breath for Daniel. Then there are the stories in Kings. How vividly do I recall the thrill which belonged to

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the names of Elijah and Elisha! What a story was Naaman's, so picturesque and compact, having all the spareness of true art. And so with the whole Bible. Do we not all know its deep influence upon us? Is it not, in Quiller-Couch's words, "in everything we see, hear and feel because it is in us, in our blood"? The great speech of the Psalmist, Isaiah or St. Paul tugs at the heart; we cannot escape it; it is strangely woven into our life. Like the pattern on the nursery wall-paper it has written itself upon our being; it is part of the psychological inheritance (to say the least) with which we were born and have grown up. It is, to use a phrase of Katherine Mansfield, "part of our breathing". And she was pure and brave spirit enough to know that ignorance of this Bible was therefore bitter loss; she complains that the facts elude her and, indeed, they do. In 1919 she writes, "A little fly has dropped by mistake into the huge sweet cup of a magnolia. Isaiah (or was it Elisha?) was caught up into heaven in a chariot of fire once." That is, she attributes to Isaiah (or was it Elisha?) what all Christendom once knew to belong to Elijah. We may use her own words in comment: "I feel so bitterly that I should have known facts like this."

It is here that St. Paul's word to Timothy, *From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures*, comes to remind parents, teachers, class-leaders, ministers and all men and women who care about the world that is to come after them, of two things. First, the Bible should be given with reverence and love to little

children. With special volumes available to make the approach easy there can be no excuse for anyone who is responsible for children but who shrinks nevertheless from making them free of this treasure. Second, when Sunday Schools have done all that they can, when the Church has shepherded and the preached Word has been heard, the best and most lasting knowledge of the Bible and of Christianity comes from the witnessing home. The mothers of our country must bring their children to Christ themselves. Theirs is an eternal priesthood, going back to devout women not a few, like "thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice".

Too many people to-day are living on the mere sentiment of their fathers' faith rather than on that faith itself. It is not an unfeigned faith within them, and so they are listless about ensuring that their children shall "from childhood, know the Holy Scriptures". Often they do not know the Scriptures themselves and, anyhow, those Scriptures no longer contain for them the Word of God. But a terrible nemesis may await this cruel indifference. It matters supremely that the eternal moral things revealed in the Bible shall belong to the age that is coming to birth. If Jesus Christ is not to rule this world of men, there is no hope for men. As Canon Quick put it recently, if the world does not become much more Christian than it is, it will speedily become much less moral than it has been. And we are like those runners in the games long ago, who had to hand on the torch; we cannot delegate the task of witness to someone else, to some mild Sunday School

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teacher, for example, as though religious training were something that could be "put out", like the washing. The work of the Sunday Schools is indispensable and precious indeed, but all of us have to keep that which is committed to our trust. The Church must witness or perish.

## CHAPTER V

### A CHURCH IN ACTION

"These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, xvii.

"The Church was framed for the express purpose of interfering (or, as irreligious men will say, meddling) with the world."—JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

WHENEVER the Church is truly alive it knows that evangelization is its fundamental task. Its faith, worship and witness have to be such that plain men cannot help seeing the relevance of Christianity to their everyday life. The Church ought to be so convincing to wayfaring men everywhere that they can neither deny nor doubt the truth and power, the judgment and grace of the Gospel.

Such a Church would be very much alive. It would be a Church in action, since action is the permanent characteristic of life. We cannot define what life is in itself; it is a mystery definable only in terms of its manifestations. Just as the living organism functions through the active body with which it is linked, so the Church in action is the necessary instrument, the indispensable organ, of vital Christianity.

This action is mainly twofold. A living Church lives, first, to regenerate individual lives; second, to judge and redeem the social and political order which

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is the environment of those lives. It is with this theme of conversion, this duality in unity—the changing of individual hearts and wills, and the changing of an evil economic and social system—that our last chapter is concerned.

. . . . .

It is easy and comforting to bring the charge of defeatism against those who face the facts in these days of disintegration and breakdown, and who insist that things are wrong with the whole world and look like being worse. Yet little reflection and less experience suffice to discredit facile optimism.

The time is out of joint and men know it. To begin debating this accepted fact would be to waste time and thresh straw. Instead of glad confident morning on our horizon there is only the question mark of Max Beerbohm's famous cartoon.\* There is little profusion of the ethereal spirit among us; little open vision. Small wonder that serious men look wistfully and even urgently for the children of Issachar, men that have understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do.

A Christian man is not an optimist, in the accepted sense of the word. He knows that this is a fallen world wherein sin is ever a stern reality. On the other hand

\* Now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. It depicts a tall, immaculate and slightly stooping youth looking across a wide landscape at a question mark which hangs over the distant horizon like a baleful star. Max Beerbohm entitled it "The Twentieth Century looks at the future."

he is no quietist, refusing to be up and doing in God's name. But he goes down to the root of his problems first. He knows that the weakness of our modern world is religious and that our social problems in all their vast multiplicity begin and end in the religious problem.

The world is wrong, not because it has not yet discovered a new social technique, but because individual hearts are wrong. Sin would still be our stark intractable problem even if we all woke to find ourselves in Utopia to-morrow morning ; " You cannot build the Golden Age out of leaden men." Problems innumerable wait for their solution at the hands of statesmen, scientists, economists and teachers ; but there is not a social problem under heaven which can advance toward real solution unless the greater problem of which it is an aspect is first met and dealt with in the secret places of the individual heart. It is there that the solution must be found if it is to be found at all. Only redemption and conversion can meet our case.

Someone will say at this point perhaps that this is dangerously like the vicious individualism which is the fundamental cause of our modern social ills, and that—to quote Professor John Macmurray—the Christian is " wrong in imagining that it is possible to cure the ills of humanity by a spiritual regeneration that leaves the organization of economic society out of account."\*

\* See his chapter in *Christianity and the Social Revolution*. (Gollancz.)

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But, with the possible exception of thorough-going Pietists who contend that the Christian must leave mundane things like politics and economics alone, no Christian imagines anything so contrary to the whole tradition and witness of Christian social thinking and practice. Both the Catholic and the Reformed traditions can appeal to the clear witness of Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin—to name only these—when they insist on the application of Christian principles to economic and social problems; and (to anticipate the next section of this chapter) it is an insistence which they, as Christians, are emphatically right in making.

The point which has to be made first, however, is that all our collectivist plans and policies presuppose the individual. It is now fashionable to decry the eighteenth century and to lament its evil legacy of atomism or individualism in philosophy, politics, economics, and even religion. The eighteenth century is charged with having dealt with things and people in isolation; the very causes which made politicians poor sociologists are said to have made the clergy poor churchmen, limiting them to dealing with individual souls. And there is truth in the charge. Individualism was the keynote in religion as well as in politics. When Thomas Carlyle spoke of Methodism "with its eye ever upon its own navel", he meant that the religion of the Evangelicals was not corporate or social; the love of souls was their motive, and separation from the world their method. For them the fundamental



religious reality was the evangelical experience of the saved soul.

We may suspect some of these easy generalizations. Moreover, this sharp antithesis between collectivism and individualism, though useful as a rough generalization, is misleading and even untrue. That society is logically prior to the individual has been admitted ever since Aristotle's day. Yet in the last analysis society is made up of individual men and women; if a vast super-personal entity such as the State is real, so are the personal units of which it is made up. Is it not dangerously easy to hide behind systems which are in reality made up of ourselves and people like ourselves? One of the frightening discoveries of life is that the world is only oneself, re-duplicated.

The causes of the folly and woe of our time and of all times do not lie exclusively in vast intangibilities such as the Economic System or the National System, but in me and others everywhere like me who make the systems what they are. I find that my failure, my greed, my fear, match yours and that our lives interlock to form an organized system of evil. The system is wrong and must be denounced and actively opposed as such, but I cannot denounce and oppose it in an attitude of cool detachment, since I am part of the system. The system is the summation of what we all are individually. Responsibility does not ultimately lie with machineries, policies, the State, or the *volonté générale*; it lies with individual men. And though a change of machinery and system is a clamant necessity and an

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actual possibility, a change of heart and will is our fundamental need. Is it absurd to suggest that we Christians may now be spending too much thought on machinery, on external sociological forms, on reforms and laws designed to force the reluctant human material into the desired mould? Ought we not to remember the biological fact that it is spirit which creates structure and not vice versa? Function precedes structure. It is an old fallacy to assume that the skeleton is deposited before the body, instead of after it. Just as creeds come last and not first, so our many new structures must *on the whole*\* be the result rather than the cause of new life.

The old order is plainly changing before our eyes and we look anxiously for the new. The Faith proclaims that we cannot have the new world of which we dream without God's judgment and redemption. New life must be life in God, and though Christian experience is never bleak and lonely individualism, such newness of life begins in the solitary individual heart. Conversion is an experience indefeasibly private and personal. Coming to God is like dying; it is the most private act a man can perform. He walks that way alone. His nearest and dearest may stand by and watch, but thither they cannot accompany him nor can they take his place. It is no accident that in the Scriptures which have God's grace in redemption as their abiding theme, this metaphor of death, death to the past and

\* On this important qualification, see the next sections of this chapter.

its sin, is used again and again to express the lonely experience of redemption :

*His dying crimson, like a robe,  
Spreads o'er His body on the tree ;  
Then am I dead to all the globe,  
And all the globe is dead to me.*

We cannot inherit religion, complacently serving ourselves heir to it because our fathers had it in plain abundance. We cannot be born Christians as we were born Englishmen, Welshmen or Germans—a truth which the metaphor of being born *again* makes sufficiently plain. Religion is not necessarily ours because we were baptized into Christ's holy Church or because we are members of a church-going multitude. Have we made religion our own affair, crying with the Psalmist in joyous awe, *O God, Thou art my God*? Have we "improved our baptism", to quote the old phrase? A man cannot come to God by proxy. Priests cannot guarantee him communion with God; they cannot take his place in the secret place. Religion begins as conversion, and conversion is inescapably personal. The New Jerusalem can be built upon this earth, but spiritual regeneration of individual men and women is the condition.

This, however, is only half the story, and the two halves belong together indivisibly, as do the convex and concave aspects of the same curve. Granted all that has been said so far, we have to go on to insist unambiguously that Christianity is not quietism;

"other-worldliness" is as grievous a denial of the meaning of the Incarnation as is secularism, and any present-day theology which has not a revolutionary sociology as part of its implicit logic is not truly Christian. It is because Christ has verily redeemed us by His Cross and His Precious Blood that He alone can redeem our human society for us and through us, casting out the demons of pride, lust, greed and fear, freeing us from the curse of war, destroying our hideous and filthy slums and building Jerusalem here. Christians are in no doubt as to the hypocrisy and blasphemy of an unethetical evangelicalism. The Church that did not stand uncompromisingly for social justice and love of the brethren everywhere for whom Christ died, would be rightly held to contain hardly any religious principle worth having.

This, however, is precisely the charge which Christianity has to meet in these days, whether Christians like it or not. Indeed, the charge is being pressed by people inside the churches as well as by an indifferent or hostile multitude outside. The conscience of wayfaring men everywhere is being stirred and educated by social injustice; they contend that the Church is too often defending lost causes or causes that deserve to be lost, and that Christianity must either lead or be left behind in a world wherein events are rapidly out-running the discredited ideas and practices of economic or political individualism.

The prophetic call for repentance and radical change is sounded by the Church itself, and therein the Church

is being true to its best traditions, Catholic and Protestant. In its warning against Communism, the recent pastoral letter from the Catholic Hierarchy of England and Wales made this pronouncement :

The social injustice which has for so long been the scourge of Europe, if not of the world at large, has brought Christian civilization in this generation well-nigh to the verge of destruction. . . . In this country we must acknowledge that much progress has been made in social reform. But we are far from the recognition of those Catholic principles which we have been taught ought to be applied in order to remedy the poverty and misery of so large a number of our fellow men and brethren. . . . The defects and injustices of the system are so great that there is a constantly rising tide of hatred against it and against all who seem to support it. Falsely the Communists are teaching the working man that the Catholic Church supports the system of industrial capitalism—and not merely the Catholic Church but all religious bodies. By this means they are able to draw into their ranks and into their militant atheism many suffering poor workmen.

We, therefore, your pastors in the tradition of our predecessors, and notably of Cardinal Manning, publicly raise a united cry against injustice and against the oppression of the poor and of the workers, against the exploitation of the helpless.

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But while we protest against the injustices of the present system of industrial capitalism, we are bound by the duty of our pastoral office to state clearly and unmistakably the dangers of the crisis before us. The real alternatives with which we are faced are, either atheistic Communism or the full acceptance of Christianity.

*Mutatis mutandis* this pronouncement is in line with the abiding witness of the Bible and the Church—of Amos, Isaiah and St. Paul, of St. Ambrose, St. Thomas Aquinas and Calvin, of Bucer and Richard Baxter, of Thomas Chalmers, Maurice and Kingsley. It is typical, too, of countless statements, official and unofficial, coming from all parts of the Church to-day. There have been innumerable conferences; manifestoes, resolutions, books and letters to the press—all attempting to face the facts in the same realist temper. Indeed, pronouncements are all too easy to make and therein lies their danger. Moral indignation solves no problems even though it does needed service in forcing men to see that they are problems. Vague confessions of sin, as Malcolm Spencer reminds us\*, lead us nowhere.

Perhaps personal testimony spoken out of full experience is therefore more arresting. In a recent sermon before the University of Cambridge on the words "Let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John iii. 18), Canon Pelly spoke of his former parish of Shoreditch in East London. "There",

\* *Economics and God* (S.C.M., 1936).

he said, " I found indeed an amazing amount of courage, of patience, of cheerfulness and of neighbourly goodwill, but the fundamental economic fact is an individualism carried to such a point as to evacuate life of nobility and worth. Each man, or at least each family, must struggle in competition against all others to maintain its position in the economic order ; and over all hangs the horrible shadow of unemployment. The unemployed man is the very symbol of our problem. He belongs nowhere ; he is not wanted in the social organism. And this isolation is even more soul-destroying.

" It is against that background that we must see the Church of Christ. It talks much of fellowship ; indeed, that is the most overworked of all the words in our modern religious phraseology. I soon found I had to give up using it in Shoreditch. It raised a smile on the faces of the more intelligent younger people. They had heard it so often and found it empty. There had been plenty of love ' in word ' but it lacked the deeds ' to make it real '. We must find the way to a Christian fellowship which will be something more than a smile and a handshake at the church door, fellowship that penetrates down to the hard economic facts and redeems them." Canon Pelly went on to speak of the two rival religions which have now appeared on the scene in Shoreditch, Fascism and Communism ; and here it is relevant to quote what he says about the latter. " It calls for economic justice. It is impatient of the excessive riches of the rich and especially of the

security which wealth assures, as contrasted with the poverty and insecurity of others, not less virtuous, not less intelligent, but less fortunate. It believes it could establish a human brotherhood, not on the fascist basis of blood and soil, but on the basis of a revolutionized economic system."

How, then, does vital Christianity express itself in action?

To say that the spiritual regeneration of individuals (admittedly the fundamental need) is enough is, in Reinhold Niebuhr's words about the Oxford Group Movement, "to combine bourgeois complacency with Christian contrition in a manner which makes the former dominant".\*

To say, on the other hand, that in the present period of crisis and transition the main concern of the Church is with politics and economics is to betray all that is distinctive of the Gospel, as a supernatural Word of Judgment and Grace in Jesus Christ the Saviour.

The one error makes man the unfettered creator of his environment, but results in something dangerously like quietism and pessimism.

The other error makes man the mere creature of his environment and so virtually abandons supernatural grace for self-help and social activity of all kinds, and threatens to turn the Holy Catholic Church into an amateurish London School of Economics.

If we "keep politics out of religion", as we are

\* *The Christian Century*, October 7th, 1936.



often urged to do, we shall soon discover that we have kept religion out of politics, and have built the City of Destruction instead of the City of God.

If we turn our holy Faith into a social programme, building not on a consciousness of sin and on the revelation of supernatural resources, but on the consciousness of common-sense and on the self-sufficiency of a planned economy, we turn our backs on the very fact which makes our abiding problem : namely, the mystery of iniquity, the fearful and universal fact of sin and man's desperate need for redemption. This-worldliness is an error no less childish and vicious than other-worldliness !

Impatience will not solve this paradox. Neither violence nor quietism will build the Kingdom of God. The New Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven ; but it has to be planned if it is to be built here. Our need is very great, as it ever was and ever will be. We need the grace of repentance and the desire and determination to live a new life together ; we need vision, consecrated intellect, research into the complexities of scientific sociology and monetary reform by those competent to do it ; we need discipline and staying power and all the fruits of the Spirit. It is neither desirable nor possible that every Christian should become an economist ; but it is vitally desirable and necessary that every economist should become a Christian. Therefore, for our healing, all men must kneel down again before the triumphant wounds of Christ.

## EPILOGUE

### A SANCTIFIED CHURCH

SOME things are true everywhere and always, if they are true at all. Logic, for example, or mathematics. The laws of logic are not like the laws of England ; they are as valid in Greenland as in Persia ; they belong as much to the first century as to the twentieth. Mathematical symbols which did not mean in Tennessee what they mean in Greenwich would cease to be mathematical. They might belong to Cloud-Cuckoo-Land or to Alice's Wonderland where anything may happen at any moment, but they could not belong to this order of God's creation where Truth's writ must run everywhere if it is to run at all. We know nothing of special or departmental truth ; there is no mathematics for Middlesex.

Christianity is no exception here. The life of the Church discussed in this book concerns all Christians or none. If the Christian religion as here expounded were for Japanese but not for Cornishmen like me ; if these principles of belief, worship, witness and action govern our Christian traditions of the West but not the new traditions which are being made in Africa, India and China, then the Faith would not be big enough for the centuries and the continents ; ultimately it would be a temporary or local thing like

Gothic architecture or vegetarianism which, however excellent, do not belong to the ages nor to the great globe itself as facts like gravitation, sunlight or death plainly do. If Christ is "all and in all", it means that he is "everything and everywhere"; if the Christian Faith did not belong to the world and to the ages as do Sin and Death it would have no answer to Sin and Death, and its extinction would only be a question of time. St. Vincent of Lerins was speaking prophetically as well as historically when he defined the Christian Faith as "that which is believed always, everywhere, and by all".

This does not mean that the Christian refuses the loyalties demanded by his age and place, but that these are all embraced by the larger loyalty. Look at the fine story in church history of a man named Sanctus who was martyred for Christ's sake. To all cross-examination before the authorities he replied unvaryingly, "I am a Christian." This he confessed again and again, says the old historian, "instead of name and city and race and all else". I am a Christian. The brave and quiet confession cuts across all the obvious things which separate men—time and place, culture and tradition, economic facts and political facts. The story reminds all men everywhere that they are one in Christ Jesus and that the natural things which sunder them are all nothing when compared with the supernatural things which unite them.

Alongside of the story of the Christian Sanctus I might put that famous answer of a Cynic taken captive

in war. "Of what city (*polis*) are you?" they demanded. He replied, "I am a citizen of the world (*kosmopolites*)."

It was a fine attempt. And yet the reply of Sanctus held more promise for the brotherhood of all men than did the reply of the Greek Cynic. Why was it that the religions of Greece, Israel and Rome failed to conquer the world, whereas Christianity became co-existent with civilization itself in three centuries? The answer lies not in the achievements and merits of the Christians; too often they have misunderstood the Faith and betrayed it. The answer lies rather in the Faith itself, in its intrinsic truth and power. Jesus Christ is ever bidding for the heart of the world because He is the Word of God to the world. He haunts all our life. We cannot escape Him, much less ignore Him. He pursues to the uttermost those who have ever met Him, those who have once caught the spell of His invitation and felt the power of His authority. He is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first word and the last word in all existence.

We know how dangerously easy it is to except ourselves from challenges which plainly concern us. "This will be mighty good for so-and-so," we think, as we listen to the spirited sermon or read the tract for the times, forgetting that all the time we ourselves are being searched relentlessly by it. It is fatally easy for the complacent Christian in the West to say "This will be very good for the Japanese; they need it"; and it is dangerously possible that Indian and Chinese

Christians may say "The Christian tradition of the Church—its worship, ministry and sacraments—is all very well for the West and for the Britisher who writes this book, but for *our* Christianity these things are not vital."

In fact, of course, if the main contentions of this book are true at all, they are necessarily vital for Christian men everywhere. Everything that has been said about worship and evangelism, for example, is as relevant to Indian and Chinese Christians as it is to Christians in this country and in America. And not only so, but these Indian and Chinese Christians have made discoveries which ought to lead us to make rediscoveries. A perusal of Bishop Pickett's important and fascinating book *Christian Mass Movements in India*, illuminates the important theme of Father Hebert's book, *Liturgy and Society*, and reminds us in the West of first principles which we easily forget.

To take only one example: the close relationship between Christian worship and hygiene is strikingly vindicated in Indian villages, where it is not government policy or action by a political group which causes the out-cast of humanity to develop habits of personal cleanliness and self-respect, and to bother about fresh air and extra windows in their mud houses, but Christian worship in the sanctuary. Bishop Pickett gives striking proof that cleanliness is next to godliness, in that it is most in evidence in those areas where Christian worship has been most firmly established. He adds that non-Christian opinion is most united in declaring

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this. Recalling a group of Christian Malas in a village of the Vidyanagar area, he writes :

The most moving aspect of the picture is of the people assembling for worship. A bell was rung and they came hurrying from the fields and the village. Ten or fifteen minutes later they began emerging from their houses and gathering at the church. Almost without exception they had washed and changed their clothes. The women had oiled and combed their hair in the simple but beautiful style of the Telugus, and a large proportion wore a flower in the hair. Men, women and children approached the church quietly, but with apparent joy and eagerness. Entering, they each knelt for private prayer, then sat on the mat-covered floor in rows ; the men and boys on one side and the women and girls on the other. They sang heartily, joined in the responses of the liturgy and seemed, almost with one accord, to be absorbed in the worship of God. It was hard to realize that these attractively clad, clean and neat-looking, orderly worshippers could have developed in forty years from a group of dirty, shiftless, Mala outcastes.

Here and there in nearly all of the areas we found Christian families growing flowers around their homes. We saw no flowers about the homes of non-Christians of the castes from which these mass-movement converts have come.

But there is another side to the picture, for in the same chapter of Bishop Pickett's book a closing paragraph about the evils of westernization shows how the identification of Christianity with certain western indulgences and social standards has done great harm

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and has hindered the advance of the Gospel. Because of our ignorance of the way in which westernization can be mistaken for Christianity, and because of our lack of imagination, we in the West have far to go before we learn the meaning of the great words, *For their sakes I sanctify myself*.

Again, if the young Churches of the East can give us amazing examples of the possibilities of personal evangelism, we have to realize also how much we ought to be giving to them in the sphere of theology and sociology. As surely as they have a contribution to make to us whose Christianity is so often nominal and sophisticated, so surely have we a contribution to make to them. We are all members of the One Body. The twelfth chapter of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is the Word of God to us who still fail to realize that we are part of the Church Universal. We are content to think of ourselves simply as members of Baptist, Methodist, Congregational or Anglican Churches in England when we are by our baptism and by our life in Christ members of the world-wide Church of His Body, a living fellowship of thought and prayer and service with the brothers and sisters *everywhere* for whom Christ died.

Too often the will is lacking. We will not sit down as individuals to examine our own belief, our own experience of the richness and blessedness of worship, our own witness in personal evangelism, our own contributions in money and interest, time and prayer to the witnessing power of the Church through its

## EPILOGUE

organized missionary enterprise. Perhaps we will not do these things because we dare not. We are too lazy and too cowardly to face what conscience would reveal. But a Christianity that will not do this is hardly worthy the name; the words of the great High Priest call to us, even while they rebuke us, saying, *For their sakes I sanctify myself.*



## APPENDIX

At the Hangchow Conference Christians from all over the world will be considering together the great questions dealt with in this book. It may help us to think freshly about these matters if we can understand something of what they mean in the experience of members of the young Churches overseas to whom Christianity has not yet become a matter of course.

### CHAPTER I. A WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

I. The fact that the Christian Church is now a universal Church is revealed, e.g. by

- (i) *Numerical growth.* It is impossible to give detailed figures. But it is a fact that there is now scarcely a corner of the world where the Christian Church has no footing, and the number of adherents increases year by year. In India, for instance, the increase in the Christian population during the ten years to 1931 was 32.5 per cent., and in some areas in Africa it is very high. Progress is less spectacular in other areas, but the record is encouraging almost everywhere.
- (ii) *Increasing responsibility.* There are now in existence eight National Christian Councils formed by the "younger Churches", such as the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Ceylon, the Korean National Christian Council, etc. Questions touching the support, government and extension of the Church are no longer left to the missionary, but are the concern of the whole Christian community. These Councils are seeking to interpret for their own people the bearing

of Christ's teaching on such varied matters as the Christian family, education, rural reconstruction, worship and the economic basis of life. In China, Japan and India they have inaugurated great evangelistic movements in which Christians of all denominations join enthusiastically. A growing native ministry and an increasing readiness among lay folk to witness for Christ are signs in many lands that the Church has taken root.

- (iii) *The adaptation of familiar customs and ways of thought as channels of Christian worship and witness.* Christians in the younger Churches of Africa and the East are beginning to develop Christian architecture, art, music, methods of evangelism, etc., which put the universal Christian truths and symbolism in a setting which is familiar to the people of their own lands. Some examples of this are the use of religious drama in China and of the "song and story" method of preaching the Gospel in India, and of the more familiar necklace for the wedding ring in some parts of India. Deeper than these outward manifestations are attempts to apply the teaching of the Gospel to the total life of China, India, etc.

2. The fact that the Church is world-wide emphasizes the interdependence of its members. The divisions which mar its unity in the West are being realized by Christians in Africa and the East as not merely unfortunate, but a deadly menace to its growth. In a moving appeal to Christians in the West in May 1936 the Indian members of the Joint Council on Church Union in South India wrote: "To us Indian Christians it is most humiliating that in recent months a large and powerful community of Hindu seekers should have hesitated to accept the religion of

Jesus Christ because they feared that their present unity might be lost in the various sects of the Christian Church." Plans for union in South India are at present encountering difficulties and hindrances, but the scheme is being studied with great interest in many lands, and has been taken as a model for similar schemes in East and West Africa and Iran.

*For Discussion*

1. "The Church is world-wide." "The Church is one." To what extent do you think the Church at home as a whole is alive to these two facts? What do you think would be the result if their implications were accepted by every Christian?

2. Taking into account developments in the Church overseas, what answer would you give to the charge that "the Church is unreal", and that it is out of touch with everyday life?

3. What are some of the common problems which the whole Church is facing the world over? In what ways does the fact that "the Christian Church is now a Universal Church" make a solution of these problems seem more possible?

4. What is "the new yardstick by which our missionary policy and enterprise have to be measured henceforward"?

CHAPTER II. A BELIEVING CHURCH

"The Christian faith is faith in a living God, and the ultimate ground of the missionary passion lies not in our sense of the need of man, but in our knowledge of the loving purpose of God." (W. Paton, *The Faiths of Mankind*, p. 152.) This twofold belief in a divine purpose for the world and of God's care for the individual is the distinguishing mark of Christianity as compared with the

pessimistic view of Hinduism and Buddhism, the placid humanism of Confucius and the fatalism of Islam. "The Christian Mission is not the sharing of a religious culture, it is the sharing of good news about God."

The realism and the redemptive power of Christianity are seen in its power to transform life and nerve endeavour. Dr. Pickett in his classic survey *Christian Mass Movements in India*\* tells of numbers of Christians from the depressed classes who were asked "Why did you become a Christian?" One replied, "So I could be a man. None of us was a man. We were dogs. Only Jesus could make men out of us." Another said "I was in great sorrow because of my sins. My life was very evil." "And did you find peace?" he was asked. "Yes, and I have it yet after thirty years," was his reply.

The sight of a congregation of outcaste origin at worship in a humble village chapel made a rich caste man say: "These people have found God, and I have not." In many a place in the Telugu country the testimony of the caste Hindus concerning the Christians is: "Christianity has brought God to these people." (From a sermon by Bishop Azariah of Dornakal.)

Because Christianity is a rational belief, the instruction and guidance of Christians both before and after baptism is a matter of first importance. Lack of adequate teaching and shepherding has led to a low moral level among some Christian communities, some of whom may lapse into non-Christian practices while still calling themselves Christians.

### *For Discussion*

1. "It does not matter what a man believes as long as he acts rightly." What is wrong with this statement?

\* All missionary societies, 7s. 6d.

## APPENDIX

2. The Church in India, China, Japan, etc., is often faced with the choice between forward evangelistic work and the pastoral care of those already members of the Christian Church. What is the position in the Church in Great Britain in this matter? Do you think the balance is rightly maintained here between the intensive and extensive work of the Church?

3. How would you state for yourself what is the ultimate core of the Christian faith?

4. How would you present the essentials of Christianity in speaking to various groups or individuals, e.g. Indian outcastes, educated Chinese, an unemployed Welsh miner, the business man you meet in the train, the girl in your local library, or any other type of individual with whom you yourself are normally in touch?

### CHAPTER III. A WORSHIPPING CHURCH

Worship is a reality in the growing Church overseas. It has a liberating and uplifting effect which cannot be achieved by teaching alone. Dr. Pickett says "Beneficial social changes appear to have taken place most generally where Christian worship has been most firmly established, and least generally where Christian worship has been least successfully inaugurated. Instruction, unless followed by worship, seems to achieve little in that direction. We found in the area of the United Provinces many members of the Christian groups who have been taught that God is love and loves them, and who recite John iii. 16, but still thought of themselves, as their fathers and ancestors had been taught, as a degraded, worthless people. Many times we heard from them the excuse that they were only Sweepers or Chamars. But in the areas where regular worship has become a feature of group life, we heard extremely little of that sort of thing." (See also page 90.)

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is everywhere "the focal centre of the life of the Church". Dr. Pickett writes, "We were much impressed by the testimony of pastors and superintendents in the Vidyanagar and Govindpur areas as to the helpfulness of the frequent celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and also by the appreciation of that Sacrament shown by many humble village men and women. The apparent dearth of spiritual life in areas where Christians have never participated in the Holy Communion, and the richness of that life in areas where the Communion Service is a prominent part of the Church programme, present a contrast which compels recognition." Yet the importance of the Sacrament is not everywhere recognized, and it is owing to this as well as to shortage of staff that in many areas celebrations are so infrequent that they can scarcely be regarded as a normal part of the Christian life. Dr. Pickett tells of one hundred and forty families in one area who had been Christians over twenty years, yet only three had been confirmed, and none of these three had received the Holy Communion in the three years previous to his visit. In another pastorate "only seventeen persons in eighty-six families had ever communed in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper".

### *For Discussion*

1. Baron von H"gel said: "Religion is adoration." What do you yourself feel to be the place of worship in religion? Why is worship more fundamental than either education or service?

2. What do you think is the reason for the marked difference in moral and social development in mass movement areas in India between Christians among whom regular worship has been firmly established and those among whom habits of regular worship have not been formed?

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3. In view of what you know of Church life in Great Britain and overseas, what do you think we in the West may learn from the growing Churches in Africa and the East concerning the importance and methods of worship?

### CHAPTER IV. A WITNESSING CHURCH

“Vital Christianity is necessarily a witnessing Christianity.” This fact is being realized by Christians overseas. The spread of the Gospel in Nigeria has been largely through the telling of the message by African traders or by young men travelling from one place to another. When a missionary visited an outstation in the Southern Sudan one Saturday afternoon there was not a single Christian to be found. All were out in the neighbouring villages preaching and inviting people to come to church. The mighty Chuhra movement in the Punjab began when Ditt, the first lowly convert of a very lowly people, brought to Christ first his wife and family and his whole village, and then preached Christ in every village to which his business took him. Today practically the whole Chuhra caste profess the Christian faith. “Weeks of Evangelism” have for some years been a regular feature of Church life in various parts of India, and have now been adopted as one of the methods used in the Five Years’ Evangelistic Campaign. In one area in the Telugu country 11,807 Christians, including 3,000 women, took part in the Week of Evangelism in 1936. Children ran before and after the leaders, singing songs, and performed action songs in the villages. Divinity students from Dornakal visited Sudra villages with a lantern and picture rolls.

In many lands Christians are realizing the importance of a home life rooted in habits of regular prayer and Bible study. “Christianize the Home” is the watchword of a

vigorous movement in China. Among the movement's aims are at least one Christian picture in every home, in place of the old shrine ; family prayers and Bible reading by the head of every family, to replace the old custom of burning incense sticks ; and stories of Jesus from every Christian mother. In West Africa the realization of the unique influence of the Christian mother and the Christian home has led to the opening of " schools for brides ". In Uganda the success of the Mothers' Union has resulted in the founding of a Fathers' Union, on the men's own initiative.

The Christian school has an extremely important place in the missionary enterprise, and today when the demand for education is world-wide the responsibility laid on Christian educationists is enormous. This is particularly the case in Central Africa, where generous Government grants are available for posts in mission schools. Yet this great opportunity is slipping away in certain areas because these posts remain unfilled and the Government is compelled to make other arrangements.

### *For Discussion*

1. The Bishop of Dornakal recently expressed disappointment because only half the total number of Church members took part in the annual Week of Evangelism. Would such a proportion be considered a cause for disappointment in any Church at home ? If not, where lies the difference in our standards ?

2. What practical steps can you suggest for a " Christianize the Home " movement in this country ? Do you think such a movement could be inaugurated in connection with the Recall to Religion ?

3. In view of the great movements of the spirit which are taking place in India and elsewhere, and the opportunities



of Christian education which are waiting to be seized in Central Africa, what weakness can you discover in the challenge to "make England Christian first" ?

## CHAPTER V. A CHURCH IN ACTION

I. "Religion begins as conversion, and conversion is inescapably personal." Must we then condemn as unsound the mass movement which brings a whole tribe, village or caste together into the Christian Church? Much harm has undoubtedly been done in the history of the Church by wholesale baptism without sufficient test of the knowledge and sincerity of the converts, or provision for their later training in the Christian faith and life. But the following points must be remembered in thinking of mass movements in India or elsewhere :

- (i) "From infancy the village Indian has been trained to subordinate personal initiative to the guidance of the caste group." "Ask him who he is, and he will tell you not his name but the name of his caste. . . . This typical villager consults his fellows about matters of importance. . . . Thus it would be surprising if the religion he professes were not a subject for group action." (*Christian Mass Movements in India*, pages 26-27.) The consciousness of personal responsibility and personal freedom of action come at a comparatively late stage of Christian development, with a growing sense of personal relationship to Christ.
- (ii) The typical Indian mass movement is a movement spreading through a whole social group and from one group to another, not a wholesale turning to Christianity of all the groups in a given area. Where a whole group together accept Christ they can as a rule continue their normal way of life, and Christianity

thus spreads, not as a teaching from without, but as a life growing up within the community.

- (iii) Throughout the history of Christianity it has most often been by mass movements that nations and communities have come over to the Christian faith.

2. The Church overseas by its very nature and position among non-Christian peoples has been led to stand uncompromisingly for social justice and the relief of suffering. Medical Missions have been pioneers in this work in Africa and the East.

Toyohiko Kagawa, the great Japanese Christian leader, has struggled unceasingly for the betterment of social conditions. In 1926 the Japanese Government, moved by his words and writings, set itself to wipe out the slums in the Empire's six largest cities in a period of six years. His advice was also taken in plans for bettering the lot of the Japanese peasant. In 1930 Kagawa opened his great "Credit Co-operative Society" scheme which aims at giving back self-respect to the penniless unemployed by making them self-supporting. A few years later Kagawa began Students' Co-operatives, with Government permission, to teach students the principles of social reconstruction and lessen the cost of living for them. He has also introduced his own system of sick insurance for those who do not receive State benefit, and has founded the National Anti-War League of Japan.

### *For Discussion*

1. When we or our friends say "Why doesn't the Church do something about it?", what do we mean in fact by "the Church"?
2. How do you think the Church as a fellowship can most effectively influence society?

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3. Historically the Church has tended to launch movements for education, health, social reform, etc., which have afterwards been merged in the work of the State. Does this mean that the Church has no place in such movements? If not, how can it make its influence felt?

4. There are not two Gospels—a social and an individual. How are these two aspects related in your own experience?

## FOR FURTHER READING

- Christianity in the Eastern Conflicts.* W. Paton. (Edinburgh House Press, 2/6)
- The Faiths of Mankind.* W. Paton. (Student Christian Movement Press, 2/6)
- The Way of the Witnesses.* E. Shillito. (Edinburgh House Press, 2/6)
- Interpreters: A Study in Contemporary Evangelism.* M. A. Warren. (Highway Press, 2/6)
- Christian Mass Movements in India.* J. W. Pickett. (All Missionary Societies, 7/6)
- The Untouchables' Quest.* Godfrey Phillips. (Edinburgh House Press, 1/-)
- Worship in other Lands.* H. P. Thompson. (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 2/6)
- Christian Union in South India: An Adventure in Fellowship.* W. J. Noble. (Student Christian Movement Press, 2/-)
- God's Candlelights.* Mabel Shaw. (Edinburgh House Press, 2/6)



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## What is a living church?

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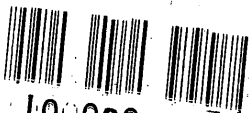
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